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## THE DELUGE.



**G. WOODFALL, ANGEL COURT, SKINNER STREET, LONDON.**

# THE DELUGE.

## A POEM.

BY

MRS. EDWIN T. CAULFEILD,

AUTHOR OF

"THE INNOCENTS," "EARTHQUAKE AT ALEPPO," ETC.

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"AND GOD LOOKED UPON THE EARTH, AND BEHOLD, IT  
WAS CORRUPT, FOR ALL FLESH HAD CORRUPTED HIS WAY  
UPON THE EARTH."  
GENESIS VI. 13.

"BUT AS THE DAYS OF NOAH WERE, SO SHALL ALSO  
THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE."  
MATTHEW XXIV. 37.

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LONDON:

BALDWIN AND CRADOCK, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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1837.

654.



TO HER HUSBAND,  
AS A WORK  
UNDERTAKEN AT HIS SUGGESTION,  
FORWARDED AND  
COMPLETED BY THE AID OF HIS REMARKS,  
DESCRIPTIVE OF HIS VIEWS, ON THE ACTUAL CONDITION  
OF THE WORLD,  
IN REFERENCE TO PAST AND-~~COMING~~ DISPENSATIONS,  
BUT, ABOVE ALL,  
AS A TOKEN OF RESPECT AND AFFECTION,

**This Poem**

IS DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR.



## CHARACTERS.

---

ARPHAXAD,	The King.
ARBA,	Captain of the Guard.
ADMATHA,	Brother to Arba.
LAMECH.	
CUSH.	
IRAD,	one of the Chief Captains.
OMBI,	a Philosopher.
SHAMMAH,	a Bard.
ZOHAR,	a Hunter.
EBER,	a Minstrel.
AN ASTRONOMER.	
A STRANGER.	

---

The PATRIARCH NOAH.

The FAMILY of the PATRIARCH.

---

ZILIA.

APAME.

MAACHA.

---

Nobles, Priests, Soothsayers, Captains, Citizens,  
Guards.



# THE DELUGE.

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## PART I.

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*The Garden of the Patriarch.—Break of day.*

THE PATRIARCH.

——He is gone.—

Like the last gleam of sunshine on the clouds  
Ere yet the gathering tempest burst—so calm,  
So bright, so peaceful, was thy closing scene,  
Methuselah of centuries!—

He dies<sup>a</sup>;—

And the flood cometh! Yes—no sculptured cave  
Shall guard thee in its breast—Thy resting place  
Shall be Earth's deep foundations, thy lone tomb  
The dark, and boundless waters.—

As we knelt

Around the sacrifice, th' appointed Lamb,

<sup>a</sup> Methuselah signifies "*he dies, there is a dart,*"—or "*a sending forth,*" namely of the Deluge, which came the very year that Methuselah died.



And laid our hands on the devoted head  
 In humble recognition, both of sin  
 And sin's desert, *his* faltering touch was there—  
 It strengthened him ; and, on the wings of faith,  
 His spirit brake triumphant from the world  
 Along those paths of glory Enoch trod.—  
 He's gone—and we remain, last witnesses  
 Of the great Judgment ! To my prayers and tears,  
 Not one, not *one*, of this vast multitude  
 Hast Thou adjudged, Ruler Supreme !—No lone  
 And wandering sheep this voice hath turned back  
 Into Thy fold ;—no solitary ear  
 Hath gleaned of this full harvest.—I submit—  
 O teach me to adore !—

(*Addressing SHEM, who enters ;*)

My son, how fares  
 Thy mother ?

SHEM.

With her vigils faint, she seeks  
 A brief repose—Thy daughters, round her couch  
 Silently mingle tears.—

THE PATRIARCH.

Yes, 'tis a shock  
 Painful to mortal flesh.—Albeit they bear

The objects most beloved into the dark,  
 Mysterious future, yet to leave a scene  
 So long endeared, so beautiful!—My son,  
 Lift up thine eyes, behold yon distant bark,  
 Lost in the blue immense, the wilderness  
 Of sparkling waters—It appears a speck—  
 Yet is that fragile speck replete with life,  
 Life's hopes, and cares—So shall we float, ere long,  
 An atom on the weltering deep ; yet watched  
 By the unslumbering eye of God—

SHEM.

Oh, Father,  
 Have none repented ? none ? That righteous sage,  
 Omri,—I hoped for him.—

THE PATRIARCH.

*Self-righteous*, say,  
 Who of his tainted deeds presumes to bring  
 An offering, abhorrent, to the Lord.  
 Recallest thou when, at our sacrifice,  
 He stood, confessing it but just to yield  
 The bounteous Giver, tribute of His gifts—  
 But when we urged the hidden purport, shewed  
 In that blood-streaming substitute, *himself*  
 Righteously smitten ; proud, he turned away,

And, pointing to the city at our feet,  
 Bade us admonish *sinner*s.—Yet, my son,  
 It is a noble wreck, and my heart yearns  
 To snatch it from destruction.—

SHEM.

But one more—  
 Is *she* not teachable,—the royal bride  
 Whom as a daughter thou hast warned?

THE PATRIARCH.

Alas,

And still must warn her to the end! Her light,  
 Awful to think, her light and privilege,  
 Increase her condemnation. Yet the soul  
 May, as by fire, be rescued—What are we  
 That, in this sweeping judgment, *we* should find  
 A Father's arms, and claim a Father's care?—  
 Grace, sovereign Grace! unhop'd, unmerited!  
 Long have we dwelt in peace, secure and calm,  
 Though camp'd about by gathering enemies  
 Athirst for slaughter.—Holiest! feed Thy flock!  
 Thy *little* flock, which solitarily dwells  
 Amid these ravening wolves!—O wean our souls  
 From treasures unsubstantial—wisdom give,  
 Child-like, enduring confidence to meet

Our last, sharp trial, on this guilty scene—  
Thou, our sole strength, and Thou our full reward.

SHEM (*alone.*)

Beautiful Earth! all smiling, as if sin  
Had ne'er infused a venom,—joyously,  
On this last dawn of peace, thou wakest, fresh,  
And wreathed with virgin chaplets—Beautiful!  
Thy blushing face throws off its dewy tears  
And, as in days of innocence gone by,  
Looks up to the blue heaven, without a cloud;  
Heaven, like a Parent's brow, benignant, mild—  
And to this hour, long suffering.—Guilty one!  
Wrap thee in mourning! Be thy carols mute!  
Dark are thy habitations, stained with blood!  
Apostate! what hast thou to do with peace?  
Weighed, and found deeply wanting! faithless  
proved

Amongst the worlds,—astonishment shall fill  
Their orbs at thy great overthrow, and shouts,  
From thousand times ten thousand, echo, Just  
Are all Thy judgments, just and true Thy ways  
Omnipotent! Nor be this deed unsung  
Of us, glad remnant, by Thy grace preserved!—  
(*As SHEM retires, SHAMMAH enters the Garden.*)

## SHAMMAH.

Shall I declare my purpose? Shall I own  
 That, tempted by the honours of to-night,  
 My glowing fancy frames a votive lay?—  
 Why should he frown? Yet frown he will. The  
       theme

Is lawful,—Glory to the Victor King;  
 So other lyres would sound, were mine unstrung.  
 The bloody wreath of conquest must be twined  
 With bays, immortal blooming.—*Bloody* wreath?  
 —Ha! Like an eagle I must gaze afar;  
 Not as the vulture, brood on carnage.—Hence,  
 Dark scruples! Why torment me, mystic spell?  
 Why lure me to a monitor, whose voice,  
 With deep, yet tender boding, silences  
 The joyous music of a carnal heart?  
 In vain I strive to flee thee.—Pass this night,  
 And I am his; my noblest strains shall rise  
 In honour of the sole, eternal God.—  
 Enough—my spirit brightens—He comes forth!—

## THE PATRIARCH.

Young Shammah here! How long shall fancy drug  
 Thy soul with deadening opiates? How long  
 Wilt thou pervert thy noble gift? How long

Adore the gods of brass, and stone?

SHAMMAH.

Deem not

So vilely of thy servant; he has long  
In secret honoured One, and One alone!—  
Disjoined for ever from the brutish crowd,  
And eager for thy teaching, I disclaim  
Worship of brass and stone.—

THE PATRIARCH.

And yet of *fame*,

*Genius*, and *glory*, in his hidden soul,  
Shammah his *idol* frames, then bows him down.—  
Young man, be honest! Boldly search *within*—  
The Idolatry most deep and dangerous,  
Is of the *spirit*.—And why come to-day?  
Went not my heart with thee, when the gay train  
Of courtiers, sought thy dwelling? When the sun  
Of royal favour flashed upon thy thought,  
And, with its blinding beams, concealed each trace  
Of painful wisdom, gilding e'er the depths,—

SHAMMAH (*interrupting*).

Oh spare me, spare!

THE PATRIARCH.

Whence springs this monstrous lust

Of flattering, savage strength, tyrannic sway,  
 Merciless bloodshed, foul idolatry?—  
 Whence, but from love of *self*; that thirst of praise  
 Which, in the warrior, drowns the earth in gore,  
 And, ~~in~~ the poet, bribes the eulogy  
 Of such rapacious deeds?—

SHAMMAH.

Oh ! didst thou know—

THE PATRIARCH.

I know it all—The purple robe to-night—  
 Th' inebriating shout of high applause  
 From all the princely throng—the sparkling bowl,  
 Sent from the King's own hand—the laurel crown—  
 All honour, saving that, which comes from God,  
 The approving voice of conscience!—

SHAMMAH (*after a pause*).

It is true—

My ardent youth, my promise to the lords—  
 The expectation of my friends, conjoined  
 With the deep stirrings of the immortal fire,  
 All plead for this one sacrifice—This *one*.

(*He takes the hand of the Patriarch*).

Unbend that solemn brow.—Were Shammah  
 free,—

## THE PATRIARCH.

“Were Shammah free?” And why not free, my son?  
Thy tyrant is *within*.—He to thy lips  
Holds the full cup of praise—

*(Slowly and emphatically,)*

And thou wilt quaff—

And perish in the tasting!—*(Retires.)*

## SHAMMAH.

—Much thou knowest,  
Prophet too stern,—much; but not all—Thy glance  
Paused on to-night, but saw not the return  
Of Shammah, crowned with honours;—saw him not  
Cast down that crown, in tribute, to the Lord—  
Saw not his future walk, apart from sin,  
A son, amid thy sons, awaiting calm  
This earth’s great dissolution!—How his smile  
Will greet me! Come, the morrow! Now, my lyre,  
Pour thy last strain to glory!—



*(A public avenue leading to the city—A crowd assembled in expectation of the arrival of the victorious army.)*

FIRST CITIZEN.

True nursling of the Priests,  
Why clench that hand, why bend that scowling brow  
On yonder harmless roof? Ungluttet, still,  
By nightly slaughters, dost thou crave the blood  
Of one poor *dreamer*?

SECOND CITIZEN.

Curse on him, and his!  
Would that my glance were lightning! Sleeps  
the sword  
Of sacred wrath?

THIRD CITIZEN.

Your hand! I'll heartily  
Drink to his downfall!—

FIRST CITIZEN.

Citizens! forbear!  
This is a time of mirth—Await we here  
Our conquering monarch with his gallant host?  
Methinks that charnel vaults, and caves, would suit  
Your pleasures better.

## SECOND CITIZEN.

Sneer away—My voice  
Hath roused the priests from east to west—shall  
rouse,  
Till every temple pavement float with blood—  
Why loiter here? Haste to the sacrifice!

*(Many follow him.)*

## FOURTH CITIZEN.

Were it not for the stirring sport  
Of human victims, grass might grow for me  
Along the temple courts.

## FIRST CITIZEN.

What! count ye nought  
The splendour of the worship?—Gold, and gems,  
And swelling harmonies?—While Pleasure thus  
Bestrew the way, I'll to the temple.

## FIFTH CITIZEN.

Go!

'Tis well if ye get pleasure.—As for prayers,  
Like hungry beggars, they may wait and whine  
Ere *stone* and *wood* relieve!—'Tis priestcraft all—  
There is no God.—

## FOURTH CITIZEN.

Perhaps—But, if we join

The praying crowd, 'tis well to serve a God,  
 Fancied, or not, whose tastes agree with our's,—  
 War and the jovial wine-cup.

FIRST CITIZEN.

How I burn  
 To hear the trumpets! 'Twill be a brave sight—  
 They talk of countless spoil!—

SIXTH CITIZEN.

What's that to us?  
 Can gazing fill our coffers? I shall pine,  
 Like a starved wretch, viewing those heaps of gold—  
 Look at our neighbour;—riches shower on *him*—  
 His garners burst with grain, *his* fats o'erflow—  
 He has much goods laid up for many years,  
 A happy man.

SEVENTH CITIZEN.

So art not thou, my friend!  
 Come, shall I counsel thee? The Prophet *there*,  
     (*Pointing to the Patriarch's dwelling,*)  
 Will fill thy craving—

(*A burst of laughter.*)

Ay, he will flood thy throat  
 With all the waters which exist, or spring  
 In his craz'd pate.—

FOURTH CITIZEN.

Come,—let us drag him forth,  
And give him what he loves !

SEVENTH CITIZEN (*restraining them*).

Nay, nay, our sport  
Were marred by this.—I love to hear him spout—  
His sober visage lends an edge to mirth,  
'Twill be the spiciest viand in our feast—  
A shade to set off sunshine—a wild howl  
Of tempest, when we lie secure in bed—  
Ha, ha—my taste is courtly—Hither swarm  
Lords, and philosophers—I'll warrant, friends,  
They set him prating.—

OMRI, THE ASTRONOMER, LAMECH, AND SEVERAL  
NOBLES.

FIRST NOBLE.

Now, what think ye, lords ?  
Shall we go in, and hear him ? 'Twill divert  
The hours of expectation.—

SECOND NOBLE.

I abhor  
Him, and his words.—He prophesies of me  
No good but evil—(*turns away*).

OMRI (*to the Astronomer*).

Will you enter, sir?

Our nobles might be bettered in their lives

Did they attend his preaching.

THE ASTRONOMER.

What will the babbler say?—

(*A stranger draws near.*)

OMRI.

The man is crazed

With study, and retirement—yet withal

Upright and just—I boast to call him, *friend*;

Yet vainly strive to banish from his thoughts

Their sick, their mad possession.—

THE STRANGER.

Hath it dured long?

OMRI.

Ay, for an hundred years

And twenty, hath he daily preached, and warned

Of coming judgment—Oft times have I stood,

Marvelling in secret what restrained the crowd,

Who gnashed upon him with their teeth, and swore

With frantic rage to burn the Ark he framed—

Yet from his presence flowed a sacred awe—

Amid those lions he passed forth, unhurt—

And, still, unscathed, the wondrous building lies  
In yon thick forest on the mountain's side.—

THE STRANGER.

Truly I heard of him through every realm  
My steps have traversed, and my chief delight  
Is wandering on this ample globe.—But say  
How hath he scaped the royal anger?

OMRI.

Know,

Our former monarch, buried in the mire  
Of swinish luxury, (a living death!)  
Within his palace lay, indifferent  
To all without—But when the magic bowl  
Had lulled with its last draught, and to the  
throne

The soldiery his warlike kinsman raised,  
Straight all was martial hurry.—Ere three moons,  
Arphaxad to his sister left the reins,  
And rushed to universal victory.

THE STRANGER.

Hath she ruled well?

OMRI (*smiling*).

The fair Barsiné? Oh,  
Music, and verse, the dance, the feast, and love

Rule *her*. But change must come, and those soft  
hands

Their flowery sceptre yield.—The King returns—

THE STRANGER.

To seal a gentler conquest? Is it not so?

OMRI.

It chanced, in some brief absence from the camp  
That on a fated eve, when love has power,  
Our monarch felt the witchery.—Fair the maid,  
Virtuous, and noble; in seclusion nursed,  
Like some pure spring which silently wells forth  
Within the hallowed shade.—Her voice, her lyre,  
Companions sweet of solitude, were waked  
For echo only.—Parentless, she shrunk  
From a rude world.—But straight, a loftier pulse  
Shot thro' her bosom, when th' impassioned King  
Tendered the royal diadem.—

THE STRANGER.

What chance

Delayed the nuptials?

OMRI.

Ay, that sovereign will,  
As fate imperious, was o'ermastered here.—  
Suddenly, heavily, the blight came down

Of sickness on his chosen flower. It came—  
And, ere the drooping rose upreared its stalk,  
The rage of conquest drew him to the field—  
So ends the doleful—

LAMECH.

Let me crown thy speech,  
With gayer tidings—Our victorious king  
Is on his homeward march—

*(The PATRIARCH is seen approaching.)*

THE STRANGER.

The prophet? Ha!

OMRI.

Lo, he advances.—

*(The PATRIARCH, who is immediately surrounded  
by the deriding multitude.)*

SEVENTH CITIZEN.

Not yet betaken to the ark? Hurrah!  
Then all is safe.—

THE PATRIARCH.

For sinners, safety, none.—  
Repent, and turn to the Invisible;—  
*(Great uproar in the assembled crowd.)*  
Will ye walk beneath my shade,  
Apart from this fierce din?



OMRI.

We follow thee.

*(A Court before the Dwelling of the PATRIARCH.)*THE PATRIARCH, LAMECH, OMRI, THE ASTRONOMER,  
THE STRANGER, AND NOBLES.

FIRST NOBLE.

Now, wise seer,  
Is not thy patience wearied out with *us*,  
As we of thy predictions? By the bliss  
Of earth, the scales are even.

SECOND NOBLE.

Ay, old man,  
The true, substantial *present* time weighs down  
Thy airy visions.—

THE PATRIARCH (*regarding him keenly*).

I have heard that voice—  
What doest *thou* here? The ready tool of death  
(Which stamps with bloody certainty the wish  
But just conceived) is hid within thy grasp—  
Go, to thy *victim*.—

LAMECH.

See, he answers not,  
But sullenly retires!—No human blood

Canst thou charge home on *me*, stern prophet, ~~none~~.  
 The flow'ry-zoned, and musky-tressed maids  
 Lead into sunnier paths.—The jocund bowl,—

THE PATRIARCH (*solemnly*).

Woe unto him that drinks at early morn,  
 Who sits till wine inflame him!—Woe to him!  
 Thy brother stiffens with untended wounds,  
 While on thy pavement float the healing oils—  
 Thy brother gasps for thirst, while bowl on bowl  
 Drowns the lone spark of pity!—

FIRST NOBLE (*laughing*).

Silenced, Lamech?

LAMECH (*sullenly*).

Would he were gagged! Sharp censor,—who can  
 live  
 Beneath such sifting?—

THE STRANGER.

Surely, there are here  
 No brain-sick fantasies?

OMRI.

No.—Said I not  
 That purest virtue, fit to brook the test  
 E'en of sublime philosophy, inspired  
 His daily teaching?—But we also vouch

That he hath visions wilder than the winds.

FIRST NOBLE.

At first we looked for omens. If a storm  
 Loured on the horizon, or the lashing tide  
 Assailed the shore more fiercely, every heart  
 With terror throbbed.—But time has laughed  
 away

Our senseless fear.—The prophecy grows *stale*.—  
 Old man, we long have borne with thee. Be wise;  
 Enjoy thy patrimony—Give thy tongue  
 An opiate, lest the king, returning, burst  
 Upon thy visionary woes in stern  
 And *real* judgment—

THE PATRIARCH.

Swifter judgment comes !

(*Pointing to the sea.*)

Ocean sleeps heavily. And ye may laugh  
 And dance upon the verge, like infancy  
 Around a sleeping, and a fettered lion.—  
 What if he wake to freedom ? Earth shall quail  
 Before that rush ! that stormy freedom ! Lo !  
 The mighty curb removed, he bounds ! he roars !  
 Tossing the foam of his fierce joy to heaven !—

(*A pause ; the NOBLES look upon each other.*)

LAMECH.

How can we credit thee? The days glide on  
 Blithe and unchanged. As yet the world is young—  
 But when it waxes old, why then—

THE PATRIARCH.

And *then*—

Shouldst thou survive the lapse of centuries,  
 Outnumbering the stars—know, Unbelief  
 Would hate the truth as *now*, and like a thing  
 Impossible, reject it.

LAMECH (*confused*).

Thou spakest of the stars—Behold the head  
 And ornament of science.—

(*Pointing to the ASTRONOMER.*)

’Twould be well

To learn a lesson of humility,  
 And own thy master.—

(*To the ASTRONOMER,*)

Sir, may I enquire

What the heavens promise?—

THE ASTRONOMER.

These five hundred years  
 Nightly I have pored upon the starry maze;—  
 There is no change in these celestial signs—

The lamps of heaven burn in eternal youth,  
Although the medium of his foggy brain  
Would blot them out.—

THE PATRIARCH.

Not my forebodings, sir,  
Can change the course of nature.— But, your sins  
Shall wrap the skies in mourning—*they* withhold  
The hand of blessing ;—ye are all murderers,  
Adulterers, idolaters.

THE ASTRONOMER.

What, *all*?

By the great depths of science, 'tis a clause  
Too sweeping. Thou hast overshot thyself—  
For here is Omri, the philosopher,  
Unblamable in morals.—For myself,  
I never bow'd the knee to idol yet,  
And live apart from woman. Ha, my sage !

THE PATRIARCH.

These tempt not thee.—The spangled face of  
heaven,  
Abstruse, presents attraction more profound.—  
Call not that virtue, which is natural taste,  
Or natural loathing—or mere abstinence  
From obvious crime. I know that in thy thoughts

GOD enters not.—The glorious architect  
 By His own radiant works eclipsed !—*Unseen*,  
 Therefore unhonoured !—Said I, *all* have sinned ?—  
 'Twould take small pains to prove revengeful  
                   thoughts

The seed of *murder* - the unbridled wish  
 And wandering eye, *adultery's* downward path—  
 The mad desire of eminence, or wealth,  
 Pleasure, or fame, each man's peculiar *God*—  
 Ay, worshipped with a zeal so absolute,  
 So perfect an idolatry, that all  
 Must bend in homage, or be swept away !

(OMRI *stands thoughtfully.*)

THE ASTRONOMER (*with impatience*).

Intolerant !—Words, words ; but where's the sign ?  
 Seed-time, and harvest, night and day revolve—  
 Shall all these generations be cut down  
 Without a warning ?—

THE PATRIARCH.

Dies no man, in his *prime*,  
 Without a warning ?—Falls the thunder-bolt  
 On *withered* trunks alone ? And yet in this  
 The Lord *hath* condescended ! Lo ! in *me*

The sign ye call for!—I, your brother, stand  
 A scorn, a mockery ; with prayers, and cries  
 Imploring ye to turn. Each keeps his course  
 As the horse rusheth to the battle ! None  
 Smites his repentant breast—O earth ! earth !  
 earth !

Hear the Lord's warning !—

OMRI.

Ha ! his words have power !  
 His visions deeply thrill, and yet—well thought !  
 (*Turning to the PATRIARCH,*

The common plea were *mercy*—Omri stands  
 On higher ground.—To *justice* I appeal—  
 What ! smite the righteous with the guilty ? Say,  
 Where were the justice here ?—

THE PATRIARCH.

There doth not live  
 A just man, sinning not.—All flesh its way  
 Hath long corrupted.—Lo ! this goodly earth  
 Is filled with violence ; each word, each deed,  
 Every imagination of the heart,  
 Is only evil, and continually.—Thou !  
 Who standest proud on thine integrity,

Omri! *thou* art a sinner!—

OMRI.

I reject

Boldly the charge!

THE PATRIARCH.

Thou art not, *outwardly*,

Adulterer, or murderer, nor sunk

In foul intemperance—yet Omri sins

Each day, each hour—perhaps most deeply now,

When with unblushing front he dares to stand

Before the Holy One.

OMRI.

What, sin each day,

Each hour? No—no—

THE PATRIARCH.

Omri, believest thou

A God above?—I know thou dost believe.—

Claims not this great Creator, duty, love,

Preference, and child-like service? Answer me!

Dost thou not prize His gifts above Himself?

Dost thou not snatch those gifts, and yield no  
praise?

Doth His pure will weigh down thine own? His  
word



By prophets uttered, form thy rule of life?  
 Behold, He waits, His hands, with blessing charged,  
 Unhonoured, unregarded, tending thee  
 With patient love, whilst thou forgettest Him  
 Days without number!—Shall we not write *sin*,  
 In its most black, and damning characters  
 Upon neglect like this?—

THE STRANGER (*who has listened attentively*).

Urged home, and well—  
 And had I time at present—

THE PATRIARCH.

Time? Alas,  
 How near the hour, when one, the smallest grain  
 Of that misused, and prostituted time,  
 Shall seem more precious than the hidden pearls!

(*Turning affectionately to the STRANGER,*)

No time, my son?—

THE STRANGER.

Nay, Father, make allowance.  
 Brightly yon city to the traveller's eye  
 Spreads out her glories! Many a weary day  
 I have toiled to gaze on it—now, let me pass—  
 I promise to return, and hear of thee  
 Concerning these great matters—

THE ASTRONOMER (*to the NOBLES, who retire  
with him*).

Let us go—

Why hearken to such folly?

OMRI.

That some lapse,  
Some trifling lapse—Off, false humility!  
Shall mortals be as God, or doth God ask  
Stainless obedience?—Flesh I am, and frail—  
But *sinner* is a charge too gross, too deep.—  
Ask the loose throng, who dread my stern rebuke,  
Ask the oppressed, who crowd my hall for bread—  
Will they brand *sinner* on my brow? Away!—  
Virtue asserts herself, and if there be  
A state of retribution, Omri there  
Will claim a just reward!—

THE PATRIARCH.

Alas, thou lackest  
The first step to salvation;—the meek soul  
Lowly, and humble, broken down for guilt.—  
Thy very virtues in themselves contain  
The taint of sin, and harden thee in pride.—  
How little merit in the scale remains;—  
Nor doth thine ignorance conceive that God

Alone can work in thee *that little* !—Stay—  
 Long have I watched, and warn'd—my spirit long  
 In prayer for thine hath wrestled.—Since those  
                   hands,

*Thou sayest*, are pure from blood, and from thy gate  
 The poor turn not unheeded, thou shalt know  
 What others dimly scan.—The sun to-night  
 Will set in blood, but his to-morrow's ray  
 Shall view the world of waters loosed on earth !—  
 Man shall go forth to labour, but his hearth,  
 At eve, shall lie beneath the weltering main—  
 Man shall go forth to *sin*, but——

OMRI (*interrupting him.*)

Can philosophy  
 Credit the monstrous tale? All things work well  
 In wide creation—Not without a *sign*  
 The common tempest gathers; there is *none* !—  
 Terror hath crazed thy senses, or, belike,  
 Much learning makes thee mad !—I honour  
                   thee

As one of virtuous life; but to believe  
 This brain-sick folly,—O no, no, the world  
 Would point at Omri—What! *to-morrow* ?

(*The PATRIARCH alone; CUSH enters hastily.*)

CUSH (*with bitterest irony*).

Hail !

*Matchless* philosopher ! Thrice gifted seer !  
 More wise than past experience, or the growth  
 Of hoary science, patient, and profound !  
 Pardon my rashness ! Pardon that I burst  
 Thus on thy *heavenly* musings ! Time is *short*—  
 I see such gathering *blackness* in the skies,  
 And the sun wears such *dimness*—How ?

(*Looking with mock earnestness at the sun.*)

—Methought,

Surely I saw it ;—but my eyes *may* fail ;  
*Must* be deceived, when older optics see—  
 Now hear me. By thy great example fired,  
 Thy wealthy convert also frames a bark.  
 Five hundred feet above the parent main,  
 Fast chained it lies, beside my palace gate,  
 On its uneasy couch of *stone*, and longs  
 To feel the liquid heavings of the *wave*.—

Father, rejoice,

Over thy son convinced !

(*He kneels in mock humility.*)

THE PATRIARCH.

—Thus far I've borne with thee,

Vessel of wrath. Thy deeds are filling up  
 The measure of iniquity. Not long  
 The insulted spirit of the Lord with such  
 Will pitying strive. Thou hast dragged down  
 the curse

On thine own head. Thou takest God's pure truth  
 To poison and reject it—Scoffer! go,  
 Thou basest dreg of a degraded earth!

*(The PATRIARCH enters his dwelling.)*

ADMATHA.

—I heard it in the night—I hear it now!  
 That heavenly lyre! The shadowy phantasies  
 Silently hovering round the couch of rest  
 Are touched, and minister to my despair—  
 They paint my Zilia smiling—to my side  
 They draw her virgin steps—they tune the lyre  
 Which feeds my ecstasy, and bid her hands,  
 Like odorous winds, across its surface sweep,  
 So full, yet soft the tone.—Hath life no end,  
 Or woe no measure?—Thus to feel the curse  
 Of ever gnawing wishes,—thus to pine,  
 Hating myself? For can Admatha prize  
 What Zilia scorns?—Rank, talent, comeliness,  
 Deceptive blossoms of a blasted soil,

Droop to the grave, for Zilia's blighting frown  
Hath coldly passed upon your summer pride,  
Cold, cold as death.—

SHAMMAH.

The lord Admatha here?  
Loose float his purple garments, loose his hair—  
All languishing his glances, bent on earth—  
Folded his arms, as if he closely prest  
Some loved, ideal treasure.—

So, my lord—  
Athirst for wisdom, do thy steps attend  
The gifted prophet?—

ADMATHA.

Shammah! I but know  
That Zilia haunts this place—I have no thought,  
Feeling, or wish, beyond the atmosphere  
Which breathes around her beauty—Morn on  
morn  
Wake me to fruitless anguish,—night on night  
Behold me count the aggregate of woe;  
And the full stream of busy life sweeps by,  
Viewing Admatha in his loneliness,  
Like some poor, blighted, isolated tree,  
Which droops awhile above the dancing spray,

Till verdure, beauty, gone, by slow decrease  
It sinks, unnoticed.—

SHAMMAH.

Good, my lord, rouse up  
Thy manly bearing.—If no other charms,—

ADMATHA.

Speak not of others.—

SHAMMAH.

Be it so, yet life  
Hath many joys.—War is a stirring game,  
Nor is that arm untried—

ADMATHA.

Ay, the first charge,  
When between heaven and earth we pour along,  
Is glorious ; but, that maddening moment past,  
The rest is heartless butchery.—Oh, Shammah,  
War's harlot mask rent off, her loathsomeness  
Glares, undisguised.—

SHAMMAH.

How deem ye of the chase ?

ADMATHA.

As powerless to banish thought.

SHAMMAH.

The lyre ?—

ADMATHA.

Feeds with sweet poison, multiplying  
 Th' ecstatic image in my fevered soul,  
 And tracing every lineament in flame.  
 Shammah, my life reposes on thy faith  
 Should this attain the monarch's ear.—

SHAMMAH.

The bard

Betray the lover? 'Tis a monstrous thought!  
 First bid the panting antelope abjure  
 Its favourite rill, cool gushing—tell the bee  
 To loathe its nectar.—Love is the sweet draught  
 Which fills the poet with delicious dreams—  
 Intoxicating reveries, unknown  
 To common souls.—

ADMATHA.

Zilia! thy gentleness

Thy heavenly softness, can it dare to mate  
 With one so dread?—yet thou wilt be like  
 mercy,—

SHAMMAH.

True, but like mercy from a churlish breast  
 'Thrust forth.—Beware, beware, my Lord Admatha  
 Of cherishing the vision—



ADMATHA.

Unto death !

A tyrant cannot tear her from my *heart*,  
 Or lord it o'er my *thoughts*.—What though his grasp  
 Should snatch her from these arms, yet will I share  
 In common with the sun, the winds, the waves,  
 The privilege of gazing on her beauty—  
 Teaching soft echo to respond my moan,  
 Zilia ! relentless Zilia ! Canst thou love—

SHAMMAH.

The terrible Arphaxad ?—It may be—  
 And yet I deem the bridal wreath is twined  
 By secret links, less tender—

ADMATHA.

Speak !

SHAMMAH.

Ambition—

The magic of a crown—the darling pride  
 To think the world's great victor sighs for *her*.—  
 But look, she comes ! attended by his guards,—  
 The jealous spies of royalty.—Each day  
 Humbly she seeks the prophet, while each day  
 A deeper sadness gathers in her mien.—

ADMATHA.

See ! she draws near !—How pale, yet beautiful !

The long, fair tresses braided round her brow—  
A faultless statue, filled with tender thought,  
And touched by sorrow into life.—She weeps!  
O blest Arphaxad, fall those tears for thee?  
Creature like this, should be exempt from woe,  
As above frailty raised.—

SHAMMAH.

She looks like Eden  
Ere yet disorder burst its flowery bounds.—  
(*Enter ZILIA, followed by Guards.*)

SHAMMAH.

All hail, the elected queen of great Arphaxad!

ADMATHA.

Why is she sad? Why float her eyes in tears,  
Like the soft misty moon? Why is she crown'd  
With that white rose which strews the virgin dead,  
Which never summer's breath, nor noon-tide ray  
Warm'd into blushes? No reply?—Is it pride,  
Or swelling grief?—Methinks thy words, like bees,  
Cling to their honied bower, as loth to part.—  
—Still, tears and silence?

ZILIA.

That the bride should weep

In her lord's absence, need small wonder raise—  
Prithee detain me not.—

ADMATHA.

O turn those eyes,  
The drops yet trembling in their dark blue depths—  
Or cast a flowret from thy scented hair—  
Some little token yield, to nourish hope,  
At least, fond memory ;—some blessed gift,  
In all the rich profusion of this day,  
When earth is taxed to meet her conqueror  
With universal tribute—Thus, oh thus,—  
*(He kneels to kiss the border of her robe.)*

ZILIA.

Thy gestures, Lord Admatha, are ill-timed,  
Thy words offensive.—Know, the tears, and sighs  
And wishes of the consecrated bride,  
Are treasured for her lord, for *him* alone.—  
Beware ; for watchful guards surround me. Think  
On higher things—the prophet's teaching seek—  
It will efface this trifling dream.—

*(Enters the dwelling.)*

ADMATHA.

This *dream* ?

The *prophet's* teaching?—Never word but *thine*  
Shall move Admatha! Cruel! dost thou speak  
Of deeper judgment, when those rosy lips  
Have cursed me without remedy—cut off  
From common hope—confessed the sweets of  
years

Were hoarded for my rival! He! death! death!  
My hated, my triumphant foe! Disease,  
Wither his strength! Drop from his brows, O crown!  
And from his grasp, O sceptre—

SHAMMAH.

Hush, my lord!

Passion hath mastered thee.

At least await a safer theatre

To vent its fury.—Pray thee, be constrained—

(*Leads him away.*)



## PART II.

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*Enter from the dwelling the PATRIARCH, leading*  
ZILIA.

THE PATRIARCH.

Daughter, thine hour of trial is at hand—  
The fierce Arphaxad, from the farthest east,  
The Giant Monarch comes, with spoils surcharged,  
Torn from a groaning world—Though in his train  
Unnumbered beauties for his smiles contend,  
Yet do I know he vowed to share the throne  
With Zilia only.—

ZILIA.

Brilliant, brilliant dream !  
And must it be renounced ? Oh Prophet, stern,  
And awful as the hand of death, forbear !

THE PATRIARCH.

Forbear to counsel thee ? Poor trembling child,—  
If terrible the *shadow*, hast thou faith

To master the *reality*? Be warned—  
 Meet not the King—My sons shall guide thee  
                   hence—  
 Only believe, and follow them.—

ZILIA.

                  Ah, where?  
 In what deep dungeon can our feebleness  
 Hide from Arphaxad? His hot wrath would tear  
 The very bowels of the sheltering earth.—

THE PATRIARCH.

Cast in thy lot with us, nor fear that man  
 Can touch the rescued of the Lord!—On me  
 Fall the King's fury.—

ZILIA.

                  Thou wilt suffer then!  
 Suffer for me! O no, no; not for me!  
 Arphaxad must not slay the innocent.—

THE PATRIARCH (*pointing upward*).

Hath He not promised? Shall that promise fail?  
 Is His arm shortened that it cannot save?  
 Were all earth's tyrants with their armies leagued  
 With all the hosts of Hell, to bar one soul  
 From the appointed refuge, 'twere in vain;—  
 He would deliver me.

ZILIA.

And must I fly?—

Just at the summit of my proudest hopes.  
I hear his trumpet swelling on the wind!  
The gleaming of his mail is in mine eyes!  
And now to lose—oh anguish!

THE PATRIARCH.

Is there nought

In that vast gift, thy *life*?

ZILIA.

Life—life—what is it?—

Cut off from empire, love, each darling hope,  
To toss, a lone, and melancholy wreck  
On the wild waters?—

THE PATRIARCH.

Is it nought to feel

The smile of God, paternal, when a world  
Sinks, and expires beneath His righteous curse?—  
Woman! why seek my counsel? and yet dote  
So madly dote, upon thine *idols*?—

ZILIA.

Oh,

For mercy, bear with me! I *will* resolve—  
*Will* break my proud betrothment—*will* supply



A great example. But, once more, once more,  
 Let me behold my hero - let me kneel,  
 And pour my soul at my admiring eyes—  
 One farewell look—thou wilt not grudge me *that*—  
 One parting word of tender warning—nay,  
 It may be bless'd—coming from lips he lov'd.—

## THE PATRIARCH.

Delusion all ! The gorgeous serpent thus  
 With deadly fascination strikes his prey.—  
 O, lost in passion's labyrinth ! Shall he,  
 Whose wild desires have never owned restraint,  
 Who never turned his charger's head, tho' blood  
 Rose to the bridle—whom, nor Mercy's cry,  
 Nor conscience, pleadings earthly, or divine—  
 His people's welfare, or his human heart,  
 Inclined one moment,—shall *he* tamely stand,  
 And in the flush of triumph yield his prey ?

## ZILJA.

But he may soften to *my* voice, *my* prayers—  
 Indeed, indeed he loves.—

## THE PATRIARCH.

Alas ! such love  
 Is the idolatry of *self*, not *thee* !  
 Thy flattering confidence will leave thee, faint,

And trembling at his feet—And, lo, the sands  
Drop fast! the moment nears! Thy time of grace  
Draws to a close—Hark! hark! the thundering  
tramp

Of hosts advancing! Hark! the trumpets clang!—

SHEM (*enters*).

—They come! the fell destroyers! War their  
trade—

Battle their game.—The sword, the chain, the flame  
Are in their gift.—Lo! Earth, before their tread,  
Turns to a desert, and her streams to blood;—  
Behind, a nation's curse mounts up to heaven.—  
Weeping and wailing mark their path—the blight  
Of human hopes, the wrench of human ties—  
Slave of a tyrant's will, the hireling blade  
Ravens, unsparing.—Age, and innocence,  
And suffering, trampled in thy hot pursuit,  
*Glory!*—Ah specious pest, lie forged of hell,  
Idol abhorred! What fierce unnatural rage,  
What fiendish impulse drives thy votaries!—  
What mad perversion seizes on the wise,  
The good, the gentle, by thy haughty charms,  
Beyond themselves transported, and inflamed!—

*(Trumpets.)*

Again the trumpet's blast !—The note of death !—  
The widow's shriek is in it.—

TRIUMPHANT CHORUS OF THE HOST.

We come, from the spoil of a conquered earth—  
From those climes where the sun hath his golden  
    birth—  
From the harvest of vengeance, the fields of renown,  
Where the banquet is slaughter, and glory the  
    crown !—

That harvest of vengeance, who hastened to reap ?  
At that banquet of slaughter, who drank deep ?—  
Our swords ! our swords ! and their labours dire,  
Were like the path of wide-wasting fire !—

With the soles of our feet we have dried the  
    course  
Of antient streams in their hurrying force—  
And those locust swarms which obscure the light  
To us compared, made but havoc slight.—

We swept, like the blast of the desert's breath,  
 Whose sound is fear, and whose contact, death!—  
 We burst, like the thunder-flood from the rock—  
 Woe, woe, at that rushing! Woe, woe, at that  
     shock!—

Like Famine, or Plague, when their fingers spread  
 The livid pall o'er a city's dead,  
 We have turned, and fiercely laughed to eye  
 Proud Earth, like a wreck, behind us lie!—

Hurrah! hurrah! for the wide-wasting brand!  
 Hurrah! hurrah! for the ravaging hand!  
 And our Chieftain, our war-god, the soul of our  
     fame,  
 Let the shout of a nation re-echo *his* name!—

## ONE OF THE ROYAL GUARDS.

Bow down! bow down! Our Lord the King draws  
     nigh!

(ZILIA *sinks on her knees and covers her  
     face with her hands*)

ARPHAXAD (*without*).

Where is my chosen bride, the beauteous slave

My soul delights to honour?

ZILIA.

Oh, my heart!

Meeting of terror! meeting of despair!

THE PATRIARCH.

'Twas thine own choice—Remember, Zilia,—*Life*,  
*Pardon*, and *bliss eternal*!

(*ARPHAXAD enters, followed by a brilliant train of  
Princes and Chief Captains. ZILIA remains  
motionless. He regards her sternly.*)

ARPHAXAD.

—Time was,

Zilia had sprung to strew my path with flowers—  
They erred not, who apprized the royal ear  
That Zilia with a *dreamer* passed her days—  
A wild enthusiast, one, whose silvering locks  
Might teach him better.—

(*He turns to the PATRIARCH*)

—Speak! thine aim declare,

And bless the clemency which grants thee life  
To sue for pardon.—

THE PATRIARCH.

Not for life, O king,

(For that I hold of a superior Power—)

And not for pardon do I bow this day,  
 Not having transgressed.—If offence be this,  
 That in deep supplication to my God,  
 Both day and night I spend myself, for thee  
 And for thy guilty people, warning them  
 Of the great woe, the judgment which shall overwhelm  
 Both lord and vassal in one common doom—  
 Ev'n thou, whose pride exalts thee to the stars,  
 Inflating thee to strive with the Most High—  
 Thou, that hast made the world a wilderness,  
 Shalt be brought down to hell!—  
 Thy terribleness hath deceived thee!

ARPHAXAD.

Ha, ha, ha,—too much!  
 Dotard, who am I?—

THE PATRIARCH.

My sovereign! and as such I meekly yield  
 Lawful submission in all lawful things.—  
 But higher duty prompts.—*Thy* Lord, O king!  
 The King of kings, his pleasure hath declared—  
 He calls thee to repentance!—Monarch, turn!  
 Break off thy sins; shew mercy to the poor,  
 Whose blood thou shed'st like water—Fear the  
 Lord,—

ARPHAXAD.

*Who* is the Lord, that I should fear him? *Who*?—  
 I fear not the great battle-god, nor him  
 Who launches forth the thunder! This right hand  
 Hath reaped me kingdoms, honour, wealth, renown!  
 Like yon bright orb, which rolls above our heads,  
 Throned, I look down, while half the subject world  
 Is lightened by my glory! But for *thee*—

ZILIA (*wringing her hands*).

Spare him, oh spare him!

ARPHAXAD (*still addressing the PATRIARCH,  
 without regarding her*).

Did I not design  
 To cage thee in thine ark, a spectacle,  
 A hissing, and a mockery to men,  
 'This sword should hew thee limb by limb!  
 (*Advancing to ZILIA*).

Zilia!

Still wrapt in silence? Hast thou aught to plead  
 Ere I depart? My restless battle-steeds  
 Are, like their master, all unused to wait—

(*He pauses, then sternly addresses her,*)

Bethink thee, girl! the mandate thunders forth,  
 And thou art dragged this moment as a slave

To serve, where thou hadst proudly hoped to reign—  
 Think, when degraded—but I loathe to dwell  
 Upon the image; *Beauty* I may cull  
 At any hour—*Love* is a rarer prize—  
 I *will* not lose it—I must have thee *all*—  
 The bright, untarnished glories of thy fame,  
 Thy virgin fame, as when I sought thee first—  
 Thy homage, thy soul's deep submission, love,  
 And full devotedness.—No more!—I scorn  
 To woo consent.—Now, Zilia! *now!*—or *never!*

ZILIA (*faintly*).

Oh, I am thine!

(*Swoons at his feet.*)

ARPHAXAD (*regarding her a moment in silent  
 triumph*).

Guards! bear her to my chariot!

(*They carry her out.*)

THE PATRIARCH.

Oh, lost one! fallen loveliness! so meek,  
 Gentle, and teachable, that mercy weeps  
 Denouncing thee;—O, blind to wisdom's ray  
 When heaven itself had smoothed thy path, and  
 changed  
 The wild, unfettered passions of the king



To sudden mildness—

ARPHAXAD (*scornfully*).

Such success attend

Thy warnings! Visionary, hence! Collect  
Thy household—hasten to the mountain cell  
By thine own madness for thy dungeon framed!—  
Bear thy dark bodings with thee! Earth shall  
laugh

At thy departure.

Gallant warriors,

Princes, and lords, to-morrow's rising sun  
Shall light the royal nuptials. Yonder fane,—  
(*Pointing to the temple,*)

Stateliest, where all are stately, to our pomp  
Throw wide its gates.—Now, our triumphal  
march

Moves towards the city.

THE PATRIARCH.

Monarch! Yet repent!

IRAD.

Why should this dead dog taunt my lord the king?  
I pray thee let thy servant take his head.

ARPHAXAD.

That were poor vengeance.—Soldier, he shall live!

But live to curse his folly—curse and pine,  
 While day by day the forest solitudes  
 Ring to the echoes of Arphaxad's fame!  
 Ay, soldier, he shall live, yet living, die  
 Ten thousand ghastly deaths in those he loves—  
 Stung into frenzy by the famished yells  
 Of his expiring children, till at length  
 Securely, slowly, want consume her prey!—

*(To a Captain,)*

See none be missing—in their living tomb  
 Bury them straightway!—From the multitude  
 Guard their devoted blood. I claim them all!

THE PATRIARCH *(attended by an Officer  
 and Guards).*

Howl! howl! the day of vengeance is at hand!  
 The day of the Almighty! Every face  
 Shall gather blackness! Every heart shall melt!  
 The sun thereof, shall at his going forth  
 Be darkened!—Why these mighty judgments? why  
 This pouring of fierce anger? 'Tis for sin,  
 For sin!—

THE CAPTAIN *(smiting him on the mouth).*

For thy cursed babble, this! Away.  
 Behold yon crowd—they long to tear thee.—Call

Thy children forth. Be silent!—I'll protect thee!

THE PATRIARCH.

Come forth, ye sons and daughters of the Lord!

*(His family gather around him.)*

Closed is our witness upon earth! The dust  
Which cleaves to us, we here shake off against ye,  
O lost, lost souls!

ONE OF THE CROWD.

Confusion seize thee, fool!

Thy preaching is cut short!

ANOTHER.

Ay, preach no more!

Thou hast groaned long enough for *us*.—Ha! ha!

*(Laughs.)*

Look to *thyself*!—

ANOTHER.

I am more glad than of my enemy's blood,  
That this old hypocrite, this snarling sage,  
Should be in the toils.—

THE MULTITUDE.

Away with them!

Away with them!—

ONE OF THE CROWD.

Look up, and tell us if yon blazing sun

Hath watery eyes to-day ?

ANOTHER.

How ominous,  
Yon cloudless heaven, and blue, unruffled main !

ANOTHER (*advancing*).

—Now shall I pluck his beard,  
And dash the precepts down his canting throat !—

THE CAPTAIN (*lifting his sword*).  
Stand back !

(*The DAUGHTERS of the PATRIARCH cling  
around him.*)

DAUGHTERS OF THE PATRIARCH.

Oh, father, shield us  
From this fierce people !

THE PATRIARCH.

Fear not, my beloved ones ;  
They *cannot* hurt ye.—

SHEM (*to his Wife*).

Hearest thou, fair bride ?  
They *cannot* hurt thee !—

A SOLDIER.

Thank our lord the king  
For his injunctions.—

(*Turning to the women.*)

By my soul, 'tis shame  
 These pretty birds should share the cage.—Come,  
 come,

We shall console thee—

*(Laying hold of the nearest—she shrieks.)*

THE CAPTAIN.

Peleg! the command  
 Included *all*—no folly!—Let them pass.—

*(As SHEM moves on,)*

Truly, a noble bearing! I could swear  
 The king would prize him as a soldier—

*(To SHEM.)*

Stay!—

Wouldst thou engage to serve?—

SHEM.

I am devote

To a superior Power.—

THE CAPTAIN *(muttering)*.

Absurdity!

The father's madness taints him.—Think  
 again,—

Wouldst thou regain thy lost inheritance?

SHEM.

The Lord is our inheritance.—

THE CAPTAIN (*angrily*).

'Tis vain—

The moon hath smitten them. They dote on death.  
On, to your dungeon !

THE MULTITUDE.

Curses follow them !

THE PATRIARCH.

My gentle spouse !

My trembling daughters ! Be the mist removed  
Which dims your vision.—Lo ! that arm ye dread,  
Ev'n tyranny's strong arm is our defence,  
And girds us round, as with a wall of fire,  
From this fierce people.—God can thus constrain  
Things adverse to His pleasure.—God looks down  
And laughs to scorn the impotence of man.—  
They guide us to the haven we desire,  
Where He himself shall shut us in—secure  
From all oppression.—

*(A splendid Hall in LAMECH's Palace.—  
A Banquet.)*

LAMECH, IRAD.

IRAD *(taking off his helmet)*.

So—I'm weary  
Of this long pageant.—

LAMECH *(to his slaves)*.

Wine!—Thy laurels, kinsman,  
Increase too fast. To *me* they were a load.—  
I am content to reap a humbler field,  
And please my senses.—But the steeps of fame—

IRAD.

Are for the daring soul, the straining limb,  
The prize of the death-struggle, Great Arphaxad,  
When from his gorgeous chariot he looked down  
Upon the prostrate crowd—

LAMECH.

Ay, ay—I doubt not  
Their necks bow'd low enough, and so would mine,  
For peaceable enjoyment.—Trust me, soldier,  
Fear is a mighty leveller.—And yet,  
Is the king safe?—

IRAD.

The loftiest pinnacle

Must ever brave the thunder-bolt.—Enough.

LAMECH.

'Tis a tremendous being,—to be served  
Like the dark spirits!—  
Kinsman, thou art no puny growth—that arm  
Is not a boy's—and yet compared to *his*—

IRAD.

Seems nothing!—Yet 'tis well.—I envy not  
The giants of his guard.—Their captain, Arba,  
Is of the common standard.—With what ease,  
Secure in *mental* power, he guides, and rules  
The mighty carcase!—Coolness, subtlety—  
Unconquerable daring, sage design,—

LAMECH.

A health to thee, true soldier! Thou wilt yield  
No step to the first giant of them all.—

IRAD.

I'faith, it oft enrages me to see  
Their brawny shoulders bear away the load  
Of adulation.—Trust me, in the camp  
They held their fitting place.—

LAMECH.

What place?



IRAD (*laughs*).

Ha, ha,—

A wall, a brazen wall, for headlong foes  
To spend their strength upon; to thwack, and  
strain,

And beat themselves to mummy in the toil—  
But, for the daring walks of active war,  
The midnight sally, or the whirlwind charge,  
The isolated fortress on the rock,  
Scaled in despite of steel and fire,—as well  
Might the huge elephant essay the plank  
Wherethe light courser bounds secure!—No—no—  
We have o'errun the world, and won it too—  
And they may *share* our glory, not *engross* it—  
But now a word concerning that sour sage,  
That meddling sorcerer—

LAMECH.

Talk not of *him*!

I nauseate his name! I *hate* him, Irad.  
He tells my palace secrets to the sun—  
Tears my pavilions open—Every cup  
Must have his ban on it—

IRAD.

Insufferable!

This morn his crazy head had nearly fallen  
A forfeit to my sword ; but such quick death  
Suits not the royal vengeance.

LAMECH.

Well, in truth,  
The king has cause. How changed, his lovely  
bride !  
Saw you their meeting ?

IRAD.

An ill-omened one—  
Poor girl ! The awful visions in her brain  
Have scared the loves away.—

LAMECH.

Gay revelry within the palace walls  
Nightly has flowed ; but never in such tide,  
Such congregating of all earth's delights  
As on this bridal eve.—If she be woman  
She will forget her cares.—

IRAD.

And others, too,  
This night, for ever !—

LAMECH.

Ha ! Thy speech is dark—  
And yet it strikes me.—The gay paramour,

The lordly favourite who swaggered it  
So haughtily amongst us—knowest thou  
What lot awaits him?

IRAD.

He must drain, to-night,  
A rich cup, and his last!—

LAMECH.

And fair Barsiné,  
His queen, and mistress?—

IRAD.

Like her sex, will rend  
The air with pretty shrieks, and wring her hands,  
And through her soft, disordered tresses, peep  
For another lover!

LAMECH (*filling a goblet*).

Treason, by this bowl,  
'Gainst love, and beauty!

IRAD.

Votary to both!  
We, soldiers, crop the blossoms with our swords,  
From bower to bower.—Now there is one I fain  
Would ask for.

(*Enter OMRI.*)

LAMECH (*starting*).

Omri, the philosopher !

To what must I ascribe this condescension ?  
Say, hath the general revelry inspired  
With softer thoughts thy rigid virtue ?

OMRI.

Lamech !

My virtue is no cloak to cast aside  
When the hot beams play on it. Luxury  
Shocks less than violence. I entered here  
To shun infernal cruelty.

LAMECH.

What now ?

OMRI.

Some fifty wretches, writhing upon stakes,  
Borne to the walls to blacken in the sun—  
The first mild tokens of the king's return.  
Talk no more of it.

LAMECH.

Talk ! To *hear* alone,  
Makes my flesh quiver ! Slaves, another bowl !  
We'll drown it in this rich and blushing tide.

(OMRI *refuses the bowl.*)

IRAD.

I fear me the sage Omri must retire  
And hug his virtue in some cave. *Our laurels*  
Spring out of *blood*. From blood that wealth was  
                  wrung  
Which spread these walls with gold and purple.  
                  Blood  
Cements the empire. Blood is piety.  
An hundred human victims to the Gods  
Must fall to-night.

OMRI.

Horror! on what pretext?

IRAD.

So have the priests a prosperous bridal morn  
Assured to great Arphaxad. Yet think not  
Irad approves this calm, cold butchery.  
In the red tide of battle I would plunge  
With shouts of ecstasy, though every vein  
Its rushing tribute yielded;—but I loathe—

OMRI.

A very lion! Lamech, thy bold kinsman  
Needeth some softening. In these twilight halls,  
Voluptuous, loaded with perpetual sweets,  
Luxury will do its work.

IRAD.

No work with me!

I love the stormy camp, the desperate strife,  
The captured beauty, and the deep carouse  
For hard won triumph. But inglorious peace—

OMRI.

Be comforted, stern chief! small chance exists  
Of peace, with such a master.

IRAD.

True—Our king

And leader, reads us iron lessons. Pity  
Is a babe's virtue, spurned by manly minds.

LAMECH.

I am indeed a woman by this creed.  
Give me the lavish wine cup, give me nymphs  
Dancing, like dreams, around my rose-strewn halls,  
Why, let the world go swim in blood! I'll add  
No curse to it. Smiles, radiant smiles for me,  
Not tears, and howlings.

OMRI (*aside*).

*Exquisite feeling!* By the light of truth,  
This is the pure idolatry, of *self*,  
The prophet mentioned.

(*To IRAD,*)

Valiant captain, read us  
One of those iron lessons ; they may smack  
Perchance of sterner, yet less selfish stuff—  
Out on it !

IRAD.

Nay, I swear that selfishness  
And lust of blood are so engrained, entwined,  
In my fierce tale, they cannot be divorced—  
Your ears will ache to hear it. Yet, ha, ha,  
A captain of Arphaxad, and demur  
To boast of horrors ! When the king is roused  
Hot from the city's storm, in vain may age  
Bow down,—the silver hairs are drenched in gore.  
As vainly shrieking woman seek redress,  
Abandoned to her ruffian captor. Ay,  
I have seen the lisping infant at his foot  
Sob out its life beneath that ruthless tread !  
But these are common—

OMRI.

Crimes horrific, Irad !

LAMECH.

Is there aught new in violence ?

IRAD.

It chanced

Our squadrons pressed upon a flying band;  
 Pressed and o'ertook. Vain hope! They fled to  
 seek

A kingdom by our prowess unsubdued.  
 Their youthful prince, sore pierced with wounds,  
 was borne

Into the royal presence. By his side  
 Kneelt one too beautiful; the tender spouse,  
 Who shared his wanderings. By war, my blood  
 Stirs at the thought, and burns upon my cheek—  
 Arphaxad—

LAMECH.

What did he?

IRAD.

He smote the youth  
 Even on his bed of languishing, he smote him  
 To death; then seized upon the blooming spoil.

OMRI.

Atrocious deed!

LAMECH (*ironically*).

But yet, remember, friends,  
 It was the *king*!

OMRI.

Oh, very good! the king.



A magic pass-word! Lamech holds too much  
To risk it lightly. (*Looking around him.*)

LAMECH (*confused*).

Cease this theme. Now, kinsman,  
(*To IRAD,*)

Put thy enquiry. Speak of softer things—  
Of youthful Maacha, with her starry eyes  
And glittering ringlets, if indeed grim war  
Hath not effaced? That crimson flush replies.

IRAD.

Soldiers are frank. Come, guide me to her bower.

LAMECH.

Say, ere thy absence, didst thou woo the maid  
Successfully?

IRAD.

I never wooed her, Lamech—  
Yet marked her for my bride.

LAMECH.

And dost thou know—

IRAD.

Know what? Speak promptly, kinsman! Irad  
knows

But this—If yet, unwed, fair Maacha live,  
She weds no other.

LAMECH.

Is it so? In sooth,  
 Thou must be quick, my friend. She weds to-  
 night  
 A noble, rich and powerful.

IRAD (*stamping*).

Fiends of hell!  
 Cankers corrode his wealth! These dainty nobles,  
 Tripping so softly in their silken robes;—  
 These gew-gaw revellers, who feast at home,  
 While soldiers on the flinty plains recline;—  
 How will they stare, and howl, to find themselves  
 Plucked from their gay pavilions by those hands  
 Which built them up, and gorged their craving  
 lusts  
 With a world's spoilage! Down with them!

OMRI.

Forbear!  
 Would'st thou stir up the soldiery, and turn  
 Thy birth-place to a city stormed?

IRAD (*sternly*).

Who stands  
 Between me and my prey, I count a foe,

Were he my friend, my bone of bone, my blood !  
 Look to it ! *(Rushes forth.)*

OMRI.

And this man could moralize !  
 Turn on his master's sin ; then, furious, plunge  
 Into the same abyss of passion.—Man !  
 Sensual, and selfish ! Oh, the portrait glares  
 On memory's leaf ! True limner !

LAMECH *(drawing near, and looking anxiously  
 around him).*

—Is he gone ?—

Methinks I feel his faulchion at my throat,  
 And see my palace glut the flames !—a ruffian !  
 I have heard him swear how worthless were the  
 lives

Of the base rabble weighed against his fame,  
 And mourn that glory had no nobler food.—  
 Canst thou not counsel me ?

OMRI.

Against the fear  
 Of Death ? Alas ! poor Lamech, this soft couch,  
 This purple, and this sumptuous fare each day,  
 Are poor preparatives to meet his grasp,—

That iron grasp which must be laid on all—  
 Let conscience counsel thee!

---

*The Palace Gardens.—Evening.*

SHAMMAH.

The air is hot, and on my loaded brow  
 Breathes fire.—I feel unnerved, and hideous  
                   thoughts,  
 Like spectres, throng my brain, and strangle there  
 The brood of fancy. Yet doth nature laugh,  
 As if in mockery . . . . .

                  . . . . .Every pleasing sound,  
 Peaceful or gay, from upland, grove, or mead,  
 Steals on mine ear.—The voice of human mirth  
 Rings blithely; while the sea, with lulling dash,  
 Seems in eternal cadence to respond,  
 “All things continue as they were!”—all fresh  
 As in creation’s morn.—  
 Broadly the sun descends to kiss the main—  
 O’er wave, o’er cloud, his crimson glories stream—  
 But chief, the palace burns in living gold.  
 That palace!—Was it built by men or gods?  
 Tier above tier, the stately colonnades

Ascend the sky, innumerable shafts  
Of gleaming marble, lavish as the pines  
Which robe the mountain side. And from the  
base,

(The polished base, which murmuring ocean  
laves,)

E'en to the glittering domes, each gallery,  
Each lattice, breathes a heaven of music.—

Flowers,

By fairy fingers wreathed in bright festoons,  
Luxuriant wave; profuse, as if the lap  
Of guarded Eden shook its treasures forth;—  
Ha! do its angel centinels relent?—

Its opening gates effuse their rosy gales!  
Such fragrance never fanned the blushing cheek  
Of drowsy evening!—Evening, to the bard  
Sacred, and dear. What! must she sleep her  
last

Beneath the rolling deep?.....

Must all, all pass away? That splendid pile,  
Rooted and throned in ocean, must it fall?—  
This scene of vivid, glowing, earnest life,  
Be stilled, and suddenly?

(OMRI *enters*).

OMRI.

The favoured bard  
So deep in musing? Is the theme beyond  
A poet's flight, or *flattery*?—

SHAMMAH.

Thou art harsh.—  
Is not my theme a great one?—Royalty,  
Deeds super-human, universal sway—

OMRI.

For shame! Recall the prostituted muse,  
When like the shade of bloated power she creeps,  
Exaggerating every lineament,  
Out of all truth and nature!

SHAMMAH.

Nay, be just—  
I dress no fiction for the vulgar ear—  
Earth rings with it.—The deeds of great Ar-  
phaxad—

OMRI.

Supplied a gorgeous triumph.—

SHAMMAH.

Sawest thou!  
When like the strong, resistless, rushing stream

Of some vast river, through our yawning gates,  
 Poured the triumphant host ;—and like the deep,  
 Before that torrent, wave on wave, drove back  
 The innumerable crowd, close wedged, and dark,  
 In stormy undulation, and uproar—  
 Thunder, for thunder answering ?

OMRI.

I love not tyrants, therefore shun to swell  
 A tyrant's train.—Come, I will bear from thee  
 The brightly tinted picture.—

SHAMMAH.

Sir, believe,  
 I can but faintly set it forth. In front,  
 An hundred snow white elephants advanced,  
 Their glittering turrets, terrible with spears—  
 Nor lacked innumerable camels, rich with spoil—  
 Nor coursers, of immortal grace, nor slaves  
 Of every clime, fruits of a conquered world—  
 Nor bands of dancing nymphs, with tinkling feet,  
 Their polished arms enwreathed with gems, on high  
 Tossing the silver cymbals—contrast fair  
 To the swarth, trampling legions, in the pride  
 And fierceness of their strength.—But every eye  
 Felt one attraction—

OMRI.

Ay, that secret spell  
Which binds us to the terrible—weak man  
Yearning to look on what he fears.—I pray  
Continue thy narration.—

SHAMMAH.

On his car,  
By captive princes drawn, the giant stood  
In flashing arms—the laurel on his brow—  
His countenance like thunder-clouds.—He stood  
Like some vast idol, universal awe  
Inspiring—Prostrate fell the adoring crowd,  
Then to the firmament a shout went up  
Which shook its starry lamps.—

OMRI.

Was he alone?

SHAMMAH.

Oh no, his bride elect the triumph shared,  
In person, not in soul.—Like some pale rose,  
Drooping and languishing beneath a blaze  
Too potent, half reclined the fair one sat,  
In tender trouble lost, and with her hand,  
Her alabaster hand, oft' veiled her eyes—  
Or, if a timid glance she dared to raise



On her dread lord, again it sunk, its light  
 Suffused with tears.—He, from his eminence  
 Proudly inclined, and oft-times whispering, smiled—  
 But more of triumph than of tenderness  
 Gleamed in that smile.—

OMRI.

But say, how deemed the crowd  
 Of her dejection ?

SHAMMAH.

Or they marked it not,  
 Or thought it bashfulness.—But I, who know  
 Its deep and thrilling source—O she had stol'n  
 A glance into the *future* ; her dim eyes  
 Passed o'er the joyous heavings of that crowd—  
 They saw the waters of a *shoreless sea*,  
 The gasping agonies of—I, who feel  
 The same convictions—

OMRI.

Shammah ! dreamest thou ?  
 Doth it inebriate, that laurel crown  
 So madly longed for ?—

SHAMMAH.

No, 'tis sober *truth*,  
 And stern *reality*.—Away, false shame !

I am the prophet's convert.

OMRI (*solemnly*).

Ha, in *truth* ?

What doest thou here ?

SHAMMAH (*in confusion*).

O, I am pledged, constrained—

My loyalty—On this triumphal night

The regal feast demands me.—One more strain,

*One* cup of this world's honour, and then all

Is closed for Shammah.

OMRI (*sarcastically*).

Wise expediency—

For future safety !—Nicely hast thou trimmed

Thy bark 'twixt adverse shoals ;—and yet, methinks

The plain, straight-forward course were best.—Did

Omri

Feel like to thee, the cry, *Away, false shame,*

Were but precursive of, *Away, vain wreaths,*

Bought with integrity. *Away, base gold,*

*Away*, ye courtier throng, whose serpent tongues

Beneath the oil of damning flattery

Hiss for my blood !

SHAMMAH (*much agitated*).

'Tis but a *brief* delay—

A *very* brief one—yet thy warning smites  
Heavily on my soul. Conflicting pangs !  
Could I but free myself——

*(Enter several officers from the King.)*

FIRST OFFICER.

Hail, favoured bard ! we seek thee ! For thy lyre  
The court is hushed.—The royal ear awaits  
Its feast of harmony.

SECOND OFFICER.

The crown of fame  
Glistens on high ! the urn of fortune teems  
With lavish treasures !

THIRD OFFICER.

Haste, oh bard ! *They* wait  
Whose smile is glory !

*(They throw a splendid robe over SHAMMAH.)*

OMRI.

Yet, bethink thee, youth—

SHAMMAH.

I cannot think ! Oh, thought were madness now !  
I'll rush upon the worst.

OMRI *(alone)*.

And this *he* calls  
Conviction ! What a fool is man ! How light

His resolution in the balance weigh'd  
With his own passions ! Did *I* feel like him—  
But no—I play no part before the world—  
I have not swallowed down the hideous tale,  
And yet it haunts me like an evil dream !—  
—Philosophy ! unshaken, calm, sublime !  
Rise in thy grandeur, thy unspotted worth !  
Dash back the lie on thy traducers ! smile  
In pity on the agitated mass,  
Who tost by passion, folly, madness, rave  
Awhile together on this restless scene ;—  
Lo ! Twilight steals—the dim and pensive hour,  
And, as her fairy hand each object round  
Effaces, touch by touch, the spirit owns  
A softening influence. And why *not*, Omri ?



## PART III.

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### *The City.*

#### REVELLERS' LAY.

Now the night winds sigh, and evening fades  
Along the marble colonnades—  
And the glowing skies have ceased to blush,  
And all is one deep breathing hush.—  
Slumber steals upon thy mirth,  
Glorious city ! Pride of earth !  
Rest in thy security,  
Empress of the land and sea !  
Girded by th' unbroken sweep  
Of the blue and sparkling deep—  
And the war-ships' triple chain  
Towering o'er the subject main !  
To sleep,  
To sleep

We yield these dreamy hours—  
Sunk with the dying winds, amid the dewy  
flowers!

Hist! what dulcet lutes awake,  
See! what roseate gleamings break  
On the twilight.—Groupes of girls,  
Beautiful as orient pearls  
Stolen from the dusky deep,  
Hie to chase intrusive sleep—  
Like jas'mine blossoms floating round,  
Their ivory feet begem the ground—  
While their soft inwoven hands  
Circle us in flowery bands—  
And in mirth their dark eyes swim,  
Like wine cups, dancing to the brim—

To love,

To love

These witching hours be given—  
Away! repose to love must yield, to love, the  
earthly heaven!

Ho! the goblets! Love and wine,  
Link we thus in deathless twine;

Bring the melted topaz flowing,  
Or the crimson nectar glowing  
Like the brightly blushing west  
When the day-god sinks to rest—  
Thus to quaff, and thus to lie  
Upon beds of ivory,  
Drowned in odours, who can measure  
Of our bliss the countless treasure ?  
Thus, and thus, our hours be past,  
Each more joyous than the last—  
    To wine,  
    To wine  
These festive hours belong,  
And all its deep, entrancing dreams, beyond the  
    power of song !

OMRI (*enters*).

*Sinner !* When all the sensual multitude  
Wallowed before him, was it just to search  
For spots on *my* white garment ? Am I classed  
With profligates and atheists ? with a Cush,  
Who credits all things, save the truth—all things  
However monstrous, or improbable ;—  
Or an Admatha, he whose rotting sin



Consumes beneath the cloak of elegance,  
Whose life is one adultery?—

Who comes? ,

It is the stranger—Eagerly he drives  
Along the course of pleasure.—I'll accost him.

THE STRANGER.

OMRI.

What, sir, arrayed, and hastening—

THE STRANGER.

To a feast.—

Well, this is a rare city! They have racked  
Nature and art for fresh inventions.—

OMRI.

True—

But have these wonders from thy heart and mind  
Effaced the prophet's word?—his warning?—Say,  
When wilt thou visit *him*?

THE STRANGER.

Nay, nay—ill-timed—

And yet I purpose—Let me see—

*(Examines his tablets.)*

To-morrow

The royal nuptials, and the games—next day,  
The temples, gardens, baths, and theatres—

Then such a string of feasts! Your nobles here  
Are votaries to the wine—Yet sir, believe,  
I am not in this gay abandonment  
So lost, but that I purpose to attend  
At some *convenient* season.—Sir—farewell!

(OMRI *reclines against a pillar.*)

LAMECH (*followed by a train of Slaves.*)

Slaves, prepare  
My bath, with prodigality of sweets—  
Let precious oils abound; with lavish hand  
Fling round the costly balms, of which one drop  
Might renovate a life!—Away! The wine  
Has fevered me.—

(LAMECH *discovers a miserable object  
lying near his gate.*)

—What wretched thing art thou,  
Whose loathsomeness pollutes my marble steps?  
Hence! or the dogs— (*Enters the palace.*)

OMRI.

Dogs were more pitiful—  
Selfish indulgence! Bloated cruelty!  
How execrable—

(*Clashing of swords is heard.—Re-enter*

LAMECH *without seeing OMRI.*)

LAMECH (*terrified*).

Would that the earth would gape,  
And swallow up that mob of soldiery,  
With their huge faulchions, and their savage scowl!  
I fear me, we have seen an end of peace.—

OMRI (*aside*).

Ay, *peace*, to fatten on thine endless feasts,  
Luxurious swine! Truly the prophet spake—  
Yes, all his words I prove, and find them true—  
What, *all*?—

(*Clashing of swords is heard again.*)

LAMECH (*greatly alarmed*).

Again, again! This way they come.  
Ho! slaves, make fast my gates.—It shall be so—  
Out on their riotous brawling! When will man  
Eat, drink, and sleep in quiet brotherhood?

(*Enters his palace.*)

OMRI (*looking after him*).

O thou art mild, and merciful!

(*Shouts—Parties rush in fighting.*)

—Ha! soldiers,—

And citizens in gay attire, their heads  
Circled with flowers—and more, and more!—They  
fly!—

'Tis as I augured!—

*(One of the pursued party stumbles and falls.)*

OMRI *(raising him)*.

Tell me, art thou hurt?

OMRI.

How goes the bridal?

CITIZEN *(wiping his brow)*.

Bridal? I forgot—

Blood sullies bridal robes, and clashing arms  
Make hideous music.—These frail garlands too  
Are sorry head-gear.—

OMRI.

Be composed.—

CITIZEN.

All swam,

Temple, and priests before my sight.—All swam,—  
Stunned with the suddenness.—One rush he made—  
Dashed down the torches, seized the shrieking  
bride—

OMRI.

'Twas Irad!

CITIZEN.

'Twas a hurricane! So swift  
He bore her off, and dealt his lightning blows,

Backed by his hounds of blood— (Shouts.)

—We took to flight—

But hither wends the bridegroom with a train

Of armed friends—I warrant me they'll strive

For such a prize, right manfully.—Away.—

(He flies.)

OMRI.

Irad has learnt well

In the *iron* school he spake of.—Is not this

His master o'er again? some softening down;

But we could swear them branches of one stem.

---

(Another quarter of the City.—IRAD rushes in,  
bearing MAACHA in his arms, followed by a few  
Soldiers.—He ascends the steps of a Portico.)

IRAD.

Here make our stand.—Curse on that churlish  
swine,

Who barred his doors against us! He a kinsman!

Fire shall reward him!—

(Distant shouts.)

Comrades, hark! They come

With gathered numbers. Fatal confidence,

To bring so few good swords ! By death, I smile  
 To think upon the train *he* mustered up  
 To guard one fluttering dove, yet lost her !

(*Shouts nearer.—To a Soldier,*)

Haste ! Rouze my troops ! Yet if their hottest  
 speed

Should prove too late, I charge you, bury me  
 Beneath my slaughtered foes !

MAACHA.

Oh, kill me not,  
 Tremendous warrior ! Mercy !—

IRAD (*caressing her*).

Sweet ! be still—  
 I have sworn by love and war, no other arms  
 Shall clasp thee !—

(*The BRIDEGROOM and his Party advance.*)

THE BRIDEGROOM.

Gallant friends, fight on ! Lo, there  
 The beauteous prize of valour !

IRAD.

On my soul  
 Not won so lightly ! Thus, and thus.—

(*Striking down several of his opponents.*)

Lay on,

Stout comrades! Ten have bit the dust.—Me-  
thinks

Thy love grows cool, gay bridegroom! Hast thou  
eyes?

Thy blooming bride is in mine arms! Thy spoil  
Hangs round my neck!

*(A furious contest.)*

—Gallants, how relish ye

The taste of these broad faulchions? Do they bite?

Unlike your trumpery toys, your gilded reeds—

This, in return!

*(Slaying one, from whom he had  
received a mortal wound.)*

Curse on that woman's hand,

Armed with a bodkin!— *(Trumpets heard.)*

They arrive! Hurrah!

#### THE BRIDEGROOM.

One more effort, friends!

He bleeds—he staggers!—

IRAD *(plunging his sword into MAACHA's bosom).*

Victory! Mine in death!—

*(Shouts.—The SOLDIERS pour in.)*

## ONE OF THE CAPTAINS.

Irada! Alas, too late?—

IRAD (*expiring*).

Not for revenge.

(*Dies.*)

## THE SOLDIERS.

Irada! Revenge! revenge!

(*They surround the opposing party, who are  
speedily overpowered and put to the sword.*)

---

(OMRI'S Garden.—Midnight.)

## OMRI.

The yells of war have ceased.—Silence once more  
Exerts brief influence; but peace is not,  
Save of the tomb.—

Yet all *above* this world,  
This little spot, darkened with woe and crime,  
Seems bathed in most profound tranquillity—  
A delicate, and pure enamelling  
Hath crept along the zenith.—Exquisite!—  
And I bethink me, when a boy, I longed  
To gather up such pearly shells, dispersed



Along heaven's quiet shore.—

Albeit the tides,  
Which lave my garden, tempt me to repose,  
With musical, low chime, I cannot sleep—  
How many at this hour lie down in blood!  
Whilst, revelling, our tyrant hears, nor heeds  
What his fierce soul esteems its element.—  
—Just now, I passed the walls, where hopelessly  
The victims pined, each on his torturing stake—  
Night had no rest for *them*.—Unhoused, they kept  
The watch of agony, whose close is death!—  
They moaned for water, and invoked the heavens  
To send down retribution.—Were they heard?—  
Why should I deem it *strange*, *if* vengeance fell  
On such a world, and in its sweep involved  
Guiltless, and guilty, like the pestilence,  
Earthquake, or war?

(ZOHAR *the hunter*.)

OMRI.

—Zohar! thou art pale, and worn—  
'Tis midnight.—What unseen event hath led—

ZOHAR.

My benefactor! Let my wondrous tale,  
And strange disorder of my senses plead—

OMRI (*alarmed*).

What hath befallen?—

ZOHAR.

The triumph past, to-day  
I roamed the woods for pleasure, and approached  
By chance the Ark, which, 'neath its twilight  
bower  
Of lofty cedars, lies immoveable,  
In solemn, and mysterious solitude.

OMRI (*with anxiety*).

Go on.—

ZOHAR.

To gain a wider view, I climbed  
One of those stately trees; when, faintly heard,  
A chorus smote mine ear—more loud it swelled  
In harmonies divine, with dissonant clash  
Of arms commixt, and tramp of mailed bands—  
Soon they appeared, and, mid their iron ring,  
A groupe of either sex, serene and fair,  
Ranged round the venerable sire, whose fears,  
Or forecast, or some prompting God, had urged  
To build a refuge.

OMRI.

*God, some prompting God!*

O truth for ever sought, and yet unfound !

ZOHAR.

As they approached, a crashing in the woods  
With low, commingled growlings.—Issued forth  
A savage train—Lion, with lioness—  
Each with his mate, from every zone—who track  
The burning sands, or range the icy deep  
Cerulean, or find pasture 'neath the wave ;—  
Shapes horrible, and vast, or shagged, or swathed  
In rattling mail—yelling they issued forth—  
Yelling, they rushed upon the soldiers, spear  
And shield disdaining.—These, with frantic rout,  
On all sides fled—on all sides met their death !

OMRI.

Alas ! and that good man ?

ZOHAR.

Fear not for *him*—

The carnage o'er, licking their gory jaws,  
Again the monsters herded.—Orderly,  
They past the pale and shrinking band who knelt  
Around the praying sire.—*His* brow was calm—  
A beam from heaven illumined it.—And lo !  
The crowning wonder——

OMRI (*amazedly*).

It is wonder all—

My senses grow confused.—Proceed, while yet  
I may command attention.—

ZOHAR.

Two, and two,

By truth, I lie not!—Two and two they moved  
Into the Ark, whose entrance wide was thrown—  
The elephant, his giant bulk depressed,  
Entering, and bow'd his pillared knees, and smote  
Twice, with his sounding trunk, the hollow way,  
Ere his huge tread adventured.—All the race  
Feline, advanced with sprightly bounds. More  
slow

The gentler followed.—Camels of lithe neck,  
Chargers, gay prancing,—kine, and bleating  
sheep,  
And faithful dog, man's safeguard.—These, all  
housed,

Came rushings in the air, the element  
Beat by innumerable tribes, a swarm  
Darkening the light of day.—On sounding wing,  
Down cowered the spreading albatross, his  
plumes

Like virgin snows descending.—At his side  
 The kingly eagle, frigate, pelican,  
 Of rosy tints.—Nor lagged the ostrich there,  
 More swift than clouds before the driving gale.

OMRI.

And entered these ?

ZOHAR.

Ay, in their pairs alike ;  
 The vulture, as the dove, was gentle here.  
 Then rolled along, in vast voluminous fold,  
 The shining serpents, gliding like smooth waves  
 Into the charmed dwelling, as by wand  
 Of sorcerer compelled. Yet more, I saw  
 Of creeping things, and insects—all the forms  
 Hideous, and loathsome, dreaded by mankind,  
 Earth's foul abortions, from her entrails cast !  
 And those soft, fluttering tribes, which, year by  
     year,  
 Are born, and live, and die in flowers—whose  
     wings  
 Seem bathed in setting day.—

But eve drew on,  
 And fear came with it.—From my altitude  
 I gained the path unnoticed.

OMRI.

And the sage?

ZOHAR.

Sat, lost in contemplation.—At his feet,  
The rest were clustered, with sweet confidence  
Which cast out fear.—

OMRI.

O why not join them, youth?

ZOHAR.

Join them! I shrunk as some forbidden thing  
From consecrated ground.—I could not breathe  
Freely the air *they* drew.—My deeds rose up  
Black to remembrance, and my flesh crept chill—  
*They* were not of this world!

OMRI.

True, true.—You fled?

ZOHAR.

I did, and as I trod the darkling steep,  
Scarce knowing where I went in dreaming maze,  
They sung again—again their voices stole  
Like distant spirits on my downward flight—  
O never more shall that enchanted wood  
Again behold me! Pray thee, grant a couch  
Beneath thy roof—rest, and refreshment—

OMRI.

Go.

My board is thine—my slaves shall minister  
To all thy wants.

*(Alone.)*

—I wake, as from a trance,  
With stiffened limbs, and dizzy brain.—The sun  
Went down in blood.—I scarce can think that  
*worse*

Awaits the morrow. Yet *he* spake of worse !  
Why do his words weigh *now* upon my heart ?  
I scorned them once.—I might have followed him—  
Shared his deliverance—Oh, opportunity,  
Thou priceless gift, how lavished ! Some brief  
hours

Now past, my way was easy. O most blind !  
How do we heap up mountains with our hands  
In the way of salvation ! Am I lost ?—She too,  
That gentle being !—I might have apprized,  
I might have rescued her !

APAME (*enters from the dwelling*).

Oh, welcome, love !

What horrid sounds of warfare stunned mine ear ?  
I longed for thee, my refuge.

OMRI.

In *this* world  
Is but one refuge,—'tis the Ark! There, there—  
(*pointing to the distant mountains.*)

APAME.

I see it not.

OMRI.

But my *mind* sees it.—Haste!

APAME.

What, now? 'Tis midnight; long, and steep the  
way,  
Through gloomy forests.—See that pitchy cloud,  
Skirted by lightning, on the mountain broods!  
Oh I am faint with watching, and thyself—  
Stay till to-morrow, love!—

OMRI.

Go on—go on!

Let me be certified that I am lost,  
Irrevocably lost!—

APAME.

Oh speak not thus!  
What moody thoughts possess thee? *Omri* lost!  
The just, the pure, the virtuous? Plead I not

H



For thee, and for myself? Thou knowest how  
soon

I look to be a mother.—

OMRI (*contemplating her fondly*).

Darling hope!

How futile! Shall this lovely, breathing form  
Glowing with life, be —

(*She bursts into tears.*)

I am cruel—(*embraces her*). Come,  
Away with scowling omens! I must read  
No auguries, save in those starry eyes—  
And when we die,—Why, death must come  
to all——

APAME.

How his frame trembles! Omri! My dear lord!  
The cold drops gather on his brow—his eyes  
Are glazed, and wandering. Surely, he must need  
Repose, and medicine.

OMRI (*without attending*).

Shall I pray?

Oft *he* invited me to supplicate—  
For what? For pardon? Pardon for a life  
Of virtue! No—I cannot—*will* not pray!

APAME.

Wild are his words, and strange—

*(taking his hand).*

O turn, my love,

Within our dwelling.—

OMRI *(wildly)*.

Dwelling? Will it bide

The beating of the floods? What rock supports

Its deep foundations?—

APAME.

O, his mind is gone!

And I have crossed his wishes! See, thy wife

Ready to brave all toil, to wander forth,

Now, anywhere, so thou wilt speak again

As thou wert wont. Yet, sure, thou art too weak,

Scarce can thy tremulous limbs support thee.

OMRI *(faintly)*.

—Yes—

Lead me,.....

APAME.

Now, blessed be that gentle word!

And this kind yielding! And to-morrow's dawn—

OMRI.

To-morrow's dawn! Too late—*(laughs wildly)*.

Ha, ha, . . . . . I thought  
 Our span had ended.—Home! And there, my  
     love,  
 We'll sleep, and sleep—and dream.—But not a  
     word,  
 I charge thee, of the *future*!—There is no——  
 Hush—hush——Too late!—

*(She leads him away).*

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*(The Court of a Temple situated on an eminence,  
 and overlooking the City and the Harbour.)*

CHORUS OF MINSTRELS.

The dawn! the dawn! the breathing dawn!  
 So calm, so exquisitely clear,  
 That not one filmy cloud is drawn  
 Across the glowing atmosphere—  
     However light,  
     On skies so bright,  
 'Twould melt like snow, and disappear—  
 Earth yields her incense; bud, and flower  
 Awaken at this dewy hour,  
 Sending the soul of fragrance up  
 From silvery bell, or golden cup—

Lilies, like bashful nymphs reclined  
Ashamed to whisper to the wind—  
Roses, of pale, or damask hue,  
Like the soft, flushing clouds which strew  
The heavenly plain at evening hours,  
When stars gleam out, like gems 'mid flowers.—  
Lo, crowning all, the forest queen,  
Magnolia, robed in shining green,  
Lifts, as in playful sacrifice,  
Her ivory censer to the skies.—

## CHORUS OF YOUTHS.

The king! The king! The warrior king!  
Let thunders hail him! Lo, they spring,  
His fiery steeds, they champ, they strain,  
Impatient of the golden rein.—  
They rush, like foaming waves along—  
The glittering chariot cleaves the throng!  
He comes, the more than mortal! Sound,  
Ye trumpets, for the laurel-crowned!—  
He comes, with love, and triumph warm,  
His arm, a fate, his course, a storm!

## CHORUS OF VIRGINS.

The bride—the bride—the royal bride!  
Meet contrast to that form of pride!

With bending grace, and pleading air,  
Her voice, a sigh—her glance, a prayer !  
Like music, working on the soul,  
With bland, ineffable control,  
Her magic softness lulls each passion deep ;—  
Herself, the dream of that enchanted sleep !—

## PRIESTS.

Minstrels, strike a livelier strain !  
Wave your wreaths, ye virgin train !  
Checked before the temple gates  
Lo, the rushing chariot waits !  
Now, beneath the portal standing,  
Awe inspiring, world commanding,  
Towers the monarch ! Like that tree  
Which springs in native royalty,  
Lifting its plummy diadem,  
Above each clustering forest stem ;  
Or like some column, on whose head  
The vassal sun now hastes to shed  
His rising beam—  
*(As the royal train enter the court of the temple,  
the sun rises centrally, eclipsed. The PRIESTS  
fall prostrate.)*

ARBA.

Stand up !

Why fear the omen ? Mark ye not, the sun  
Does homage to our lord, and veils his face  
Before the noon-day glories of Arphaxad ?—

PRIESTS.

Impute not to our fault, oh gracious king—  
Full was the sacrifice—one hundred youths,  
The goodliest, weltered at the shrine.—

ARPHAXAD (*sternly*).

—Is this

A prosperous bridal morn ?—No more ! Ere long  
The Gods shall have a costlier sacrifice.—

(*Turning to ZILIA, who has sunk back into  
the arms of her attendants.*)

My Zilia ! What, quite pale—and cold ?—For  
shame !

Fears in my presence ! Zilia must not fear  
Aught, save her lord's displeasure.—Come !

ZILIA (*reviving*).

Oh, wait a day !

Propitiate by prayer.—

ARPHAXAD.

What ! Wait a day ?

No—not a moment.—

*(Bears her into the temple. The multitude  
assembled in the court.)*

FIRST CITIZEN *(pointing to the sun)*.

Look there!—It passes.—Well, a perilous weight  
Will leave my heart, when that ill-omened  
shade

Hath vanished.—

SECOND CITIZEN *(jeeringly)*.

Ha, ha, neighbour; is it thus?  
Last night you could carouse it jollily,  
Wishing a cup of curses to the lip  
Which augured mischief.

THIRD CITIZEN.

Were all clear again,  
It were a gallant sight.—The bannered troops,  
Mailed, and plumed.—The stately elephants  
Drawn up in rank, wedged like a castle wall,  
With towers and bastions flanked.—Beneath us  
spread  
The city, sending up its joyous shout;—  
And, farther still, unbounded ocean bright  
With burnished prows innumerable.—Hark! that  
shout

From the far multitude.—

SECOND CITIZEN.

Away with fears ;—

The orb is free !—

FIRST CITIZEN.

The orb *is* free—yet yields no wholesome beam  
But a strange, pallid, and unnatural glare—

THIRD CITIZEN.

Lo, the dun mists which rise from ocean's bed,  
Blotting the skies—and then, the death-like hush !

*(Trumpets. The royal train re-enter from the  
temple.)*

ARPHAXAD *(leading ZILIA forward)*.

'Tis done !—

Spite of thy pangs, thy scruples, and soft fears—  
Spite of the darkening sun, the auguries  
Of trembling dotards, or of frowning gods,  
Zilia ! thou art mine.

*(Places a diadem on her head.)*

Receive the dazzling pledge  
Of love, and empire ! *This* thy title seals  
Queen of an hundred realms !  
*(A tremendous peal of subterranean thunder.  
The temple rocks, and is partly overthrown.)*



*ZILIA totters, and the crown falls from her head. ARPHAXAD catches her in his arms.)*

ARPHAXAD.

Ha ! by the gods !

'Tis but an earthquake—I have seen it thus  
When—

*(A second concussion.)*

Zilia ! She revives !

ZILIA.

Oh, judgment ! judgment !

ARPHAXAD.

Peace, thou lovely one !

Fearest thou the rocking earth ? To pleasure thee,  
We will forego the palace of our pride,  
Clustered with pillars like a forest—based  
Like the eternal hills. To pleasure thee,  
We will ride forth on ocean's breast—its swell  
Shall yield a safer pillow—its deep voice  
Lull thee to slumber. Princes ! Warriors !  
This day, our bridal revelry shall grace  
The royal galleys.—Forward !

ZILIA (*wildly*).

Not to the sea !

Oh no, not to the sea ! O heaven !

ARPHAXAD.

Folly.—Sweet,

Some dream bewilders thee !

ZILIA (*clasping her hands, and gazing earnestly  
on the sea.*)

—It comes !—It comes !

Repent, great king, repent !—

ARPHAXAD.

What comes ?

ZILIA (*shrieks*).

The sea !

Almighty wrath upturns it from its bed !

Almighty vengeance lashes it along !

Spare us, thou long insulted God !

(*Falls senseless. Attendants gather  
round her.*)

ARBA.

O King,

That cry spake truly.

(*All rush to the terrace which overlooks the sea.*)

See that billowy ridge

Shadowing the horizon.—Ha ! right on it rolls

In deepening thunders ! The astonished tides,

Baring their caverned depths, forsake the strand  
Engulphed beneath its vortex.

ARPHAXAD.

By my glory,  
It is a noble sight! Like some proud foe,  
Curling its crest in fierce defiance!

*(A general cry.)*

The ships! The ships!

ARBA.

The mighty war-ships in that boiling surge  
All swallowed!—Still it rushes toward the land—

*(Many voices.)*

The port! The city!

ARBA.

By the infernal gods!  
The haughty floods o'ertop th' embattled wall,  
There, burst in thunder! Whelmed beneath that  
shock

The solid bulwarks shatter!

*(Several exclaiming together).*

In its rear

Another rolls, and yet another wave  
Still mightier—

ARBA.

Ha ! Erect, they foam, they roar,  
They bound, tempestuous, o'er the crashing  
walls,  
And, in one bellowing cataract, engulph  
The fated city !

(LAMENTATION OF THE NOBLES.)

Alas ! alas !

For that great city ! Wail, and rend your robes !  
The city where we lived deliciously ;  
Where is her pomp ? In ocean buried.—Where  
The sweetness of her viols ? Nought is heard  
Save the infuriate howling of the deeps  
Above her palaces !—

(LAMENTATION OF THE MERCHANTS.)

Alas ! alas !

For all her costly merchandize—the pearls,  
The purple, and the gold—the laden barks  
Which, in her lap, their spicy treasure poured !  
Alas, for those, the warlike bands which reaped  
Her golden harvests ! Long she sat, and said,  
I am a queen for ever ! Pride of earth,  
Who shall restore thee ?—

ONE OF THE CHIEF CAPTAINS.

Mark the king ! He seems  
Transfixed in horror !—

ARBA (*approaching the king*).

Bear thee up, my liege !

ARPHAXAD (*wildly*).

Where is the city ? Arba ! Answer me !

ARBA (*kneeling*).

My glorious master ! Earth presents thee still  
A thousand cities !—I conjure thee, speak  
To this discomfited people.—Lo, the priests  
Of the fall'n temple, to fresh sacrifice,  
Humbly invite their monarch.—

ARPHAXAD.

—If I speak,

My speech shall be in thunder ! See, the gods  
Make holiday, and riot in destruction ;—  
Why not, Arphaxad ? Call these loitering priests !

FIRST PRIEST.

Great sovereign, an altar is prepared !  
Heaven's sable curtains tremble on the rise,  
And the sun struggles to beam forth again  
On thee, O king, his awful delegate,

Light, life, and destiny of earth ! But yet  
 Fresh rites are fitting.—Nought too rich, too dear,  
 To yield for us, the favoured sons of heaven.—

ARPHAXAD.

Enough, O priests ! If ye be dear to heaven,  
 What blood can prove acceptable like *yours* ?  
*(They fall on their faces.)*

No fawning ! Guards, away with them !  
*(They are hurried off.)*

—“ Heaven’s curtains on the rise ” !

Liars ! and did they deem me mad, or blind ?  
 If I have yet the natural use of sense,  
 No change, no breaking light, but a dense mass  
 Of horrid darkness, gathering, deepening round—  
 As it would crush the universe.—All lost—  
 Ocean commixt with heaven, or heaven submerged  
 In ocean.—’Neath this pitchy canopy  
 Havoc makes din.—The crash of falling cliffs,  
 Temples, and towers, and howling surges rise.  
 While, restless, as those waves, the nearer crowd  
 Of homeless people, drive as terror leads—  
 And, lo, the new-born lightnings, flash on flash,  
 Ushering the deep volcanic roar;—they rive  
 The palpable darkness—Instant floods descend—

Ho ! Arba ! To the queen ! Place her secure,  
Until this tempest,—

ARBA.

It is done, my liege.  
Thy careful slaves within a litter placed  
Her fainting form.

ARPHAXAD.

What pealing thunders ! Look ! the sheeted rain  
Bright in the fitful blaze of lightning, waves  
Like a broad sabre, flashing.—

ARBA.

We must seek  
Promptly a shelter.—  
*(He speaks with the Captains of the Guard.)*

ARPHAXAD *(ironically)*.

Shelter ? In my domes  
Beneath the main ? My beauteous bride, death  
lurks,  
And revels in thy chambers !—

ARBA *(returning)*.

To the heights,  
And the strong fortress, which imperial towers  
O'er the surrounding valleys—There can rest  
The yet remaining troops.—

ARPHAXAD.

What means my soldier?

ARBA (*pauses, then wipes his brow*).

A comrade's tear bursts forth in memory—  
They were advancing from the city gates  
To join the cohorts by their monarch's side,  
When——

ARPHAXAD.

Say no more! O execrable chance!  
Arba! be sudden! Let the road be cleared  
For our approach!

*(He draws near to ZILIA's litter.)*

Fear nothing, sweet! Albeit  
In lieu of perfumed halls, a fortress rude  
Receive thy loveliness,—though fate ordain  
Awhile thy sojourn nearer to the stars,  
Yet—curse upon this driving tempest! Slaves!  
Ye loiter! Bring my chariot!

THE GUARDS.

Sovereign dread!  
Wedged in the thickening crowd, nor man, nor  
steed  
Can force a passage.



ARPHAXAD.

Advance the elephants—Trample them down !

---

*(Another part of the hill country. Vast crowds assembled ; a few Citizens grouped apart.)*

FIRST CITIZEN.

They have forced  
 Their bloody way !—What butchery is this ?  
 Is't not enough, that houseless wanderers,  
 Sore buffeted by every element  
 We suffer ; but a tyrant's iron tread  
 Must trample us ?—Poor countrymen !—

SECOND CITIZEN.

Ay, they are left, with rent and mangled limbs,  
 To the storm's nursing ;—haply till the waves  
 Give them a sepulchre.—

*(FIRST and SECOND CITIZEN retire apart.)*

THIRD CITIZEN.

Curse upon the waves !  
 I came to see the games.—

FOURTH CITIZEN.

The games ! Why look

If all the level country to the hills  
Be not one weltering sea.—The game is *death*.—

THIRD CITIZEN.

Had we but wine, and shelter, to carouse—  
(*A' crowd approach, headed by a few Priests.*)

FIRST PRIEST.

Up, citizens! The blood of slaughtered priests  
Cries out for vengeance! Have ye not divined  
The cause of this mad havoc? *He*, our pest!  
The meddling wizard! To his lone retreat,  
Where, safely caged, he laughs at us!

MANY VOICES.

Away!

Victim for victim! To the mountain's side!

SECOND PRIEST.

He raved of *water*, we will give him *fire*—  
Keen, agonizing, unrelenting *fire*!

THE MULTITUDE.

Away!

(*They depart, shouting for torches, &c.*)

FIFTH CITIZEN.

Go, raging bigots! One would think this flood  
Might slake such flaming zeal.—

THIRD CITIZEN.

Think you 'twill last ?

FIFTH CITIZEN.

The hurricane ?—Why, no—

Who ever saw a storm, or earthquake last ?—

THIRD CITIZEN.

Small comfort this, now we have lost our all.

FIFTH CITIZEN.

Courage ! Come, neighbour, we have lost ; but  
fraud,

Or force, can make it up—See, here are dice—

Let's seek some cave, or hut, and game away

These dismal hours.—

SIXTH CITIZEN.

Who joins ? I search the vaults

Where priests held jolly orgies.—Safely there

We'll set the wine jars flowing ; then, good night

To care, past, present, future !—

MANY VOICES.

To the vaults !

Wine, wine, hurrah !

SEVENTH CITIZEN.

Stout hearts, along with me !

*Some lose, we gain! the darkness stands our  
friend—*

Dying, and dead, we'll spoil.—The living too  
May have their fears cut short.—

*(As the ruffians depart, a man, unnoticed by them,  
comes forward. He stoops and looks earnestly  
about upon the ground.)*

—My enemy was in the crowd—we touched,  
And my flesh curdled with the loathing.—Curse!  
I had lost my weapon, and the hurrying press  
Drove us asunder.—Did we touch?—Touch *him!*  
Who deemed this hand, this neck, too coarse and  
vile

To set his dainty foot upon? Proud lord,  
Danger makes equal!—Poorly this revenge  
Is bought with loss of all!—

*(He recovers and conceals the weapon.)*

Well found, well found!—

I'll seek him,—pray the fiend he lives, then  
plunge,

Up to the haft, the very haft, the steel,  
And count that moment worth a life, a world!

THE STRANGER.

Where will this end? The dangers I have braved

On the wild desert or the wilder main,  
 Fade before this, the crown, and summing up  
 Of bold adventure! *This* will stamp my page  
 With fame, for which I gladly would endure  
 Perils still greater.—So far, all is well.—  
 At the first shock, leaving the city gates,  
 Aghast, I met the Astronomer, intent  
 To mount his tower upon the outer wall—  
 Earthquakes he deemed but trifles; but the eclipse  
 Baffled all calculations—it o’erturned  
 Five hundred years of study, and arrived  
 Near half a century before its time.—  
 Poor man! so puzzled was he, so abstract,  
 I doubt he heard the roaring of the waves  
 Till o’er his tower they flung their horrid shade,  
 Ending his toils at once.—

LAMECH, AND SEVERAL NOBLES.

FIRST NOBLE (*to LAMECH*).

For shame! no courage?—

LAMECH.

Woe, woe, woe! my wealth—  
 My beautiful palace—my new banquet hall!  
 Four golden statues graced it—one supplied  
 Odours still fuming—two, from lifted urns

Poured sparkling wines—the fourth, of gathered  
flowers

Held dewy chaplets.—

## FIRST NOBLE.

Pshaw! As well regret  
The tomb of thy great grandsire! Hadst thou lost  
Like me, the darling opportunity  
Of full revenge!—This day, I looked the *dead*  
Would grace *my* banquet. I had glowing wine  
To ice their veins, and waiting ministers  
To bind their grave-clothes.—My insatiable love  
With no short visit cloyed, had bade its guests  
Once, and for ever!—

## SECOND NOBLE.

I condole with thee,  
As somewhat baulked myself.—Three rebel slaves!  
Already, heated for their punishment,  
The furious cauldron roared, and bathed its sides  
With flaming oil, and, lo, the wretches die  
The gentle death of *water*!—

## FIRST NOBLE.

'Tis a day  
Of disappointment.—

(To LAMECH,)

Hast thou not a palace  
On yonder hills?

LAMECH.

The way is steep, and long—  
I see no slaves to bear me.—Heavy, chill,  
Cling my wet robes.—Alas, alas, the day!  
Better lie down, and die.—

THIRD NOBLE (*contemptuously*).

Then die *alone*,  
Effeminate! *We* seek thy dwelling.—

LAMECH.

Stay!  
Die ere three hundred summers—ere my prime?  
I must not, will not die, though life be now  
A mortal load.—

(*To the STRANGER, who yields assistance.*)

Thine arm! So—kindly helped!  
Friends, pity me!—

FIRST NOBLE.

Avoid yon hollow way—  
Down that ravine a thundering torrent burst;  
It swept away the band of frantic priests.—

THIRD NOBLE.

Joy to their downfall.—Bigot fools—intent

On mischief to the last.—Be wary, each !—

Up this ascent !

*(They ascend the hills, LAMECH clinging to  
the STRANGER.)*





## PART IV.

---

*(The arched Gateway of a Fortress.)*

ADMATHA *(throwing himself on the pavement)*.  
—A welcome shelter!

A CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

What! My Lord Admatha,  
Arrived to share our fortunes—and from whence?

ADMATHA.

A wretched hamlet, perched, like eagle's nest,  
Upon the crags, till now, a refuge gave.—  
We lived amid the roar of cataracts—  
Hourly the mountain's rigid flanks convulsed—  
Hourly disgorged its teeming waters.—Down,  
Wearied, and hopeless, I essayed a change,  
Dared all, and have succeeded.—

A YOUNG CAPTAIN.

Welcome sound!

Who speaks of blessed *change*?

FIRST CAPTAIN.

Now out on thee,  
Madcap! Thou longest to assault the waves  
Faulchion in hand!—

YOUNG CAPTAIN.

Better than let it rust  
Glued to the scabbard—

(To ADMATHA,)

Enterprising Sir,  
Whose energies I honour, pity us!  
We die of moody musings; here pent up  
Ready to cut our throats.—By death, we are  
stunned

By this monotonous, long, heavy pour,  
Of sullen waters!—Were it not the fort  
Stands, like a veteran, on th' unyielding rock,  
We had, ere this, slid down the precipice.—

FIRST CAPTAIN.

True,—'tis a dead, dull round of horrors.

YOUNG CAPTAIN.

No—

The short, sharp, thunder-burst, or sudden roar

Of fractured cliff, is glad variety —

(*To ADMATHA,*)

How knewest thou?

ADMATHA.

A fugitive told all.

The rout, the march, the seven long, awful days

Of sojourn in this fortress!—I would see

My noble brother.—

(*The YOUNG CAPTAIN enters the fortress.*)

ADMATHA (*to a veteran*).

Well, stout heart,—I find

No troubles tame the brave. The royal guard

Cheerily bear them still?

THE VETERAN.

Ay, for a time, Sir,—

To drown at last.—Nay, by ill fate I swear,

Some are half drowned already!—

ADMATHA.

How?

THE VETERAN.

In drink, Sir,—

Body and soul. They have shaken hands with  
hope

And cheat the present evil.

ADMATHA.

Is despair

Thus universal ?

THE VETERAN.

—Nay, we veterans

Have roughed it through the world too long to  
wince.

Things are too bad to last.—

ADMATHA.

Have tidings reached

Of the main army ?

THE VETERAN.

Sir, like us, they watch

For kindlier skies.—The city lies secure

As yet from inundation.—

*(A minstrel passes.)*

ADMATHA.

Ha, young Eber !

I prithee tell of Shammah, the sweet bard,

By courtly grace so favoured ?—

THE MINSTREL.

—What I know

Is your's, my lord. He graced the royal feast

On that last eve of revelry—his lips

Poured forth immortal numbers, and drew down  
 Acclaiming shouts; yet wild his mood, and strange,  
 As one who inly warred. Ere dawn, he passed,  
 Deep flushed with wine, and praise, more madd'ning  
 still,

And flung him 'neath a marble portico,  
 Laved by the heaving main. There, with cool  
 breath,

The sea-breeze fanned his brow. Heavily fell  
 That slumber, doubtless by the first deep wave  
 Changed into death.—

ADMATHA.

Mourn, love and poesy,  
 Your sweetest advocate! What other names  
 Has death enrolled, known to Admatha?

THE MINSTREL.

None,  
 Of note, hath reached; but Cush, thy noble kins-  
 man—

ADMATHA.

And what of him? I doubt if any power  
 Could tame that scornful spirit. All unawed,  
 His levity, upon a charnel heap,

Would hunt for sport, and riot in the spoil.

THE MINSTREL.

Those times are over! Prostrate at his gate,  
By madness smitten, day and night he lay  
With maniac glare fixed on the rising deep;  
But when at length the climbing billows burst  
In thunder at his feet, distract he fled,  
Nor listed whither—calling on the rocks  
To fall on him!

(ARBA enters and embraces ADMATHA.)

ARBA.

Admatha! Welcome! Say  
(*They walk aside,*)

By what miraculous chance——

ADMATHA.

Thou knowest I fled  
The hated nuptials;—how, and where preserved,  
Were long to tell. Time reaches his last hour—  
Suffice it then, that floods, nor banishment,  
Nor death, in all his various, awful forms,  
Have quenched the flame within. These dying  
eyes  
Demand their last, dear banquet.—

ARBA.

Shame on thee!

For manhood's sake despond not!—Times may  
mend—

The king is not immortal.—

ADMATHA.

True, yet Zilia,—

ARBA.

Is but a woman.—

ADMATHA.

Oh! how fares the queen  
Of my enamoured soul?

ARBA.

She lives, we live—

Is not that something?

ADMATHA.

Cruel thought, she lives,  
But for another.—Oh, my heart! The king?—

ARBA.

Like to a tiger in his mountain lair;—  
Few dare approach him,—scarce his trembling  
bride,  
Save on her knees.—Sheathed in that radiant mail  
He wore in triumph, nodding on his brow



The diademed and plumed casque—and bare  
 The ponderous faulchion in his grasp, he strides  
 Sullen along the echoing halls—or mounts  
 The embattled summit of our loftiest tower,  
 And scowls defiance on the rising deeps.—

ADMATHA.

And he is Zilia's husband! Can this be?  
 Is there a hope unfilled in her? A joy  
 Yet lacking in her presence? Poor Admatha!  
 How rich wert thou, possessing but a mite  
 Of that uncounted treasure he despises!

ARBA.

And well he may! Pshaw! What are woman's  
 charms  
 To his deep loss, a *world*! He groans, he raves,—  
 And I acquit him.—

ADMATHA.

Oh, her voice might lull  
 The savage ocean, vexed with angry winds!  
 Doth he not soften at her tone?

ARBA.

As well  
 May the light feather, from the cygnet's breast,  
 Attempt to stem a hurricane, as she

Control his raging passion! He is chafed  
 Daily by idiot priestlings, all the spawn  
 Of dreamers and astrologers; they throng  
 From distant quarters, maugre winds and floods,  
 Emulous of royal favour.—None succeed;—  
 Each hopes to be more lucky.—

ADMATHA.

What, to serve

The king?

ARBA.

To serve *themselves*. They cannot count  
 Upon a moment's life, yet madly strive  
 As they would grasp eternity.

ADMATHA.

I faint!

Beloved Zilia! Lead, lead me, Arba,  
 Where I may feast——

ARBA.

In truth I will, a feast  
 Substantial for thy famine. Well I trow  
 No draught of love could cheer thy sinking heart,  
 Like a full wine-cup. Shouldst thou dare approach  
 The presence, unadvised, I swear thy head,  
 Thy severed head may kiss thy mistress' feet—

Play not the madman.—

*(To the guards.)*

Ho ! Prepare within !

*(They enter.)*

---

*(An Apartment in the Fortress.)*

ARPHAXAD.

*(ZILIA enters, but on seeing him is going to withdraw. He waves his hand for her to advance.)*

—Approach, fair bride !

And share the lonely musings of thy lord !

—Is not thy lot most rare ? Thy destiny

Unequalled, unapproachable ? *That* morn,

(Curse on the retrospect !) Thy bridal morn,

Confusion hailed thee ! Nature thundered forth

Thy union with Arphaxad, king of kings !—

Earthquakes the temple rocked.—Darkness at noon

Its solemn curtain spread.—Thy nuptial torch

Was the red lightning in the smouldering pines ;

Thy nuptial song, the roaring of the winds

And stunning waters.—Ha ! Thou tremblest !

Judge !

Was thine the strength to follow me ? To rush

On danger, on despair, on death ! This form,

This exquisite, fairy form, what doth it here,  
To mock me with its beauty? Go!—Yet turn,  
Think not to fly me.—Thou hast sold thyself,  
Body and soul!—Thou art mine.

*(He throws his arm round her.)*

This is the staff

Thou hast chosen!

—Ay! And thou canst sigh and preach  
Of future judgment! Thou shalt share it, love,  
The privilege of suffering with thy lord!—  
Together do we tread the slippery verge  
Upon a starless height,—and that last plunge,  
Down the unfathomed steep of destiny,  
Shall be within these arms!

*(Voices without.)*

What now!—Who waits?

ZILIA *(aside)*.

He is so terrible!

Alas! I have not even the sad comfort,  
The faintest distant hope to work a change,  
A softening in that spirit—when I dare  
A warning word, his fierce derision chokes  
The prayer half-uttered. Wisdom, vainly learnt!  
How can I urge, who, by example, prove

The precept weighed not with myself?—

ARPHAXAD.

Cheer up!

Methinks my candour shocked thee. Here *they*  
come,

Who with smooth lies, and hollow flatteries  
Would strew us o'er with roses, day by day,  
Lulling the victims at the altar.

(*Enter the ASTROLOGERS, DREAMERS, and*  
*SOOTHSAYERS; they prostrate themselves.*)

ARPHAXAD.

Zilia,

Behold those sons of wisdom!—*Me*, they fear,  
More than the Gods,  
And wait my bidding to unseal the spring  
Of their prophetic raptures. Slaves, arise.

FIRST ASTROLOGER.

May the king live for ever! I have watched  
Upon the highest tower, the live-long night—  
Endured the beating tempest, strong in hope—  
And through the stormy rack, which drove along  
Surge upon surge, I caught one glimpse of heav'n,  
And on that blue profound blazed forth a star  
Propitious to thy destiny.—

## FIRST DREAMER.

And I

For the king's weal invoked the gifted sleep  
Which tints the future. Round and round my  
couch

Rolled the soft cadence of receding floods,—  
And faint, and fainter murmurings died away  
In dreamy stillness.—

## FIRST SOOTHSAYER.

Monarch ! we have poured  
Blood for libation, and by certain signs  
Announce th' appeasing anger of the Gods—  
Just was thy vengeance on the slaughtered priests,  
Behold, a worthier band ! And, by thine head,  
I swear, O king, these woes shall quickly end !—

## ARPHAXAD.

I know it. When the whirlpool's sweep is full  
Gorged with a world ;—when the black thunder-  
cloud  
Walks through the vast expanse of heaven, and  
views  
No victim for its dread artillery,—  
These woes *shall* end. Ye cringing, dastard slaves !  
Ye double-dealing fools ! Look there ! Look there !

Behold the congregated floods which rise,  
Hurling their foamy masses to the clouds !  
See how they lash the mountain's shattered side !  
Hark to the thunders of their victory !—  
Each hour, each moment, some advantage gained,  
Down crash the forests in their feathery pride—  
Down rush the cliffs precipitous ! Earth reels  
Beneath the weight of waters ! Ocean heaves,  
And from his trance of ages rousing up,  
With giant stride ascends ! And dare ye mock  
My fallen greatness ? Traitors to your lord,  
Your lying anguries bade my kingdom stretch  
Through countless generations.—To the towers !

*(Addressing the Guards,)*

Cast them down headlong ! Not a prayer—a  
word!—

There let them learn to sound the depths of fate,  
And seek the *truth*. Away!—

*(The Guards hurry them.)*

ZILIA *(approaching timidly)*.

O that my lord would seek the truth indeed !  
A star amid this darkness ! a sure pledge  
Of future pardon ! To the God of heaven  
O make thy supplication.—

ARPHAXAD (*fiercely*).

Name Him not.

Thou hast abjured Him.—Zilia, ha, my bride!

He was but *second* to Arphaxad!

ZILIA.

Just,

Too just! But oh, how bitter!

(*She retires weeping.*)

ARPHAXAD (*pacing to and fro with disordered steps*).

Arba!—

ARBA (*entering*).

My liege! Thy faithful soldier watched without—

Anxious to break thy musing.—Sees the king

The sweep of yon encroaching flood?—

ARPHAXAD (*folding his arms*).

Ay, soldier.—

ARBA.

The mountain torrents gather.—Hour on hour,

Disastrous tidings speak of plain, or vale

Turned to a lake, of routes impassable—

Our time is *now*. I fear this rock may soon

Stand like some insulated promontory.—



## ARPHAXAD.

A beacon to the nations of that fate  
 Which threatens their monarch. *Nations*, did I say?  
 Of those rich plains, and valleys, thick with men  
 Like laughing harvest, not a trace remains—  
 But a wild waste of dark, and foaming waves.—  
 Now by my soul, it suits my fancy well  
 In dogged bitterness to wait the worst,  
 Nor from their thunders one more step recede!—

## ARBA.

Let not the king say thus, nor to the hate  
 Of adverse Gods such triumph yield—now look  
 To yon colossal ridge, whose spiry brows  
 Hide in the bending heavens.—Conceives the king  
 Those heights accessible to ocean?

## ARPHAXAD.

No—

I laugh to think the sea could follow *there*,  
 Yet is my mirth half madness.—

## ARBA.

May the king  
 Give loose to mirth, and with his soldiers fill,  
 Ere long, a cup in memory of these days!

That mountain region beckons our approach  
 Till heaven has rained its fill, and shrinking floods  
 Regain their level. There, the ample caves  
 Will yield their safe recesses—and the shades  
 Primeval, of those hoary solitudes,  
 Cedar, and pine, a branchy covert form,  
 Impervious to the sluices of the sky —  
 If pressed, the distant troops may join us there.

ARPHAXAD.

'Tis well!—Now Arba, rouse those energies  
 Which crowned thee chief, where all were worthy!

Haste!

Prepare a sudden march! I would be gone—  
 Curse on my folly, *march*? The march of whom?  
 What poor remains—

ARBA.

The royal guard survive,  
 And some few squadrons.—

ARPHAXAD.

Ay, the mighty fail—  
 Sunk with their laurels in th' inglorious waves!  
 Shall it be thus with——No, by fell despair!  
 Rather let persecuting Deities  
 Wrap me in fire! Or let me gloriously

On war's red altar spring, self-sacrificed—  
 But this base end, this cold, inactive—Go !  
 I lose myself.—Insist no stragglers join  
 To drain our stores—regard nor ties of blood,  
 Nor frantic famine, so our band preserved  
 May weather out this tempest.

(*To ARBA, who is retiring.*)

Stay! That crowd,  
 The fawning train of royalty, vain toys,  
 Bred for our lighter hours, they must not go.—

ARBA.

Be the king's will unquestioned! In alarm  
 At the encroaching waters, through the courts  
 They congregate, and clamour to depart.—

ARPHAXAD.

Then cut them down!

(*ARPHAXAD alone. Cries from without. ZILIA  
 rushes in and falls prostrate.*)

ZILIA.

Mercy! Oh, mercy!

ARPHAXAD (*without raising her*).

Sweet, what fearest thou?

ZILIA.

Not for myself, for death were welcome now—

For them I plead—great king,—they slaughter  
them—

Thy slaves, thy subjects!—Speak one gracious  
word!

The courts are strewed.—I saw him gasp, and  
die,

Who lately shared thy royal smile—young  
Eber,

The sweet-voiced minstrel.—

ARPHAXAD (*folds his arms and gazes on her*).

Thine is sweeter, love.—

Thou art passing beautiful. Plead on—plead on—  
Thine earnestness but lends a livelier glow.—

ZILIA.

Oh, say my prayer is granted!

(*After a pause, she rises.*)

'Tis in vain!

Closed are his ears to pity—cold his heart  
As marble, and relentless—Man of blood!  
To whom my sins have linked me fatally;  
Tempter, and punisher, in one; would heaven  
That I had never known thee!

ARPHAXAD.

Ha! too late—

ZILIA.

Leave me, in mercy ! Let me die in peace,  
And penitence.—

ARPHAXAD.

Thou ravest, lovely one—  
Of all my conquests on this subject earth,  
The proudest, the most perfect, was o'er thee !  
The prophet gained thy credence, yet one word,  
One little word of mine, in Zilia's soul  
Outweighed conviction, terror, conscience, life !  
Say, shall I not in triumph bear about  
My beauteous trophy ?

ZILIA.

Cruel insult !

*(Turns from him.)*

ARPHAXAD *(seizing her, she struggles)*.

Hush !

As soon attempt to burst a triple chain  
Of brass, or adamant, as this embrace.—  
I love this pretty ruffling of thy plumes.  
Beautiful dove, thy bosom throbs in vain  
With its soft impotence of passion. Come !  
Around thy lord entwine those ivory arms,  
And with the low breathed music of thy voice

Soothe his chafed spirit.—Fear not.—Die who  
 may,  
 Last flower of earth, *thou* shalt not yet be  
 gathered.—

---

*(A Forest in the Mountains. Troops seen dis-  
 persed in various directions.)*

*(ARBA and ADMATHA, reclining at the entrance of  
 a cavern.)*

ARBA.

—Seven weary days

Within the fortress passed—and seven more here,—  
 Seem like so many ages.—We grow old  
 In horror's calculations. Our brave band,  
 Harassed by cold and watching, swept away  
 By sudden floods, or crushed by tumbling rocks,  
 Diminish daily. When our stores shall fail,  
 Can yon wild range of lightning-shivered peaks  
 Food needful yield? But, ere the stores be spent,  
 Mouths shall be lacking. Famine, toil, and fear  
 Shall sleep together in the rest of death.

ADMATHA.

Arba! my brother! never till this hour

Did I behold thee falter —

ARBA.

Falter? Nay,

I'm sick at heart, and may no longer cheat

The king with baseless hope. The distant troops —

ADMATHA.

Are on their march to join us.—

ARBA (*after a long pause*).

True, Admatha,

Strange thoughts will crowd on melancholy hours.

That crazy dreamer—Did you hear him preach?

ADMATHA.

I cannot say I heard him. 'Twas to gaze

On Zilia that I haunted his abode.

There as, entranced, I stood, upon mine ear

Would ring strange words of sudden *judgment, sin,*

A wrathful *God*.—But what were these to *me*?

*My* deity is Zilia.—

ARBA.

Glory *mine*!

No more of fancy——. Dark reality

Pictures th' advancing troops, perchance, reduced,

A piteous remnant, come to find a grave

With us.—

## ADMATHA.

I am content, nor shun the hour.—  
 Here I put off thy irksome tyranny,  
 O Hope ! whose servitors are fed with tears  
 More bitter as they wander round the fount  
 Of radiant happiness, with thirsting lips  
 Never to taste its sweetness. Fatal Hope !  
 Illusive spirit ! who could'st sit and smile  
 Amid the ruins of a broken heart—  
 Could'st view me curse my life, abjure my love,—  
 Yet feel its pangs to madness,—howl for death,—  
 And yet, with a dissatisfied, longing gaze,  
 Linger on earth to see my cherished *all*  
 In keeping of *another* ! Say, O Arba,  
 Can passionate devotion paint so high  
 As Zilia merits ? Thrown on Terror's breast,  
 Like that bright bird which nestles in the roar  
 Of stormy surges, we might deem that want,  
 Danger, and death, were the dread elements  
 Of her existence—Whilst her female train,  
 Unused to fierce privations,———

## ARBA.

Ay, 'tis sad  
 To view them languishing about, like flowers,



Scattered by winter's ruffian breath—They wail,  
 Whilst she, their queen, most delicately nursed,  
 Most soft, most fair, can suffer silently.—

## ADMATHA.

It is the lofty *soul* which blanches not.—  
 Her thoughts are not on earth,—Lovers, who  
 dread

The loss of all they love, are passionate—  
 So mild, so tearless, such a calm despair,  
 Breathes not of love.—And yet, who ever saw  
 A conjugal devotion more complete?  
 Such angel pureness? No, by buried Hope,  
 She never deigned to waste a second glance  
 On worshipping Admatha.—

## ARBA.

Time was, brother,  
 My raillery, perchance rebuke, had checked  
 This fruitless dreaming on thy sovereign's bride:  
*Now* I am loth to chide.—Pass some short days,  
 And ye shall find a sterner monitor  
 Thrust his cold hand between ye.

*(He rises suddenly.)*

They arrive!

*(Two captains enter.)*

It is no vision ! They arrive ! Dear friends,  
In trouble dearer, welcome !

And the host ?

FIRST CAPTAIN (*throwing himself down*).

The shadow of an army ? Ay, by noon,  
It *may* arrive.—

ARBA.

Alas, I feared the march.

SECOND CAPTAIN.

March ? ha ! ha ! ha ! 'tis battle ! at one sweep,  
Whole legions mowing ! Heaven and earth their  
foes ;—

The rattling thunder, and the charging rocks,  
Brief signal of attack ; as brief the fate  
Of hundreds whirling down the precipice.—  
No time to grieve, the remnant hurry on—  
If haste can be, where, almost fluid turned,  
Yields the loose soil ; and up the slippery steep,  
Struggling, the tempest beaten soldier strains ;—  
Fresh heights above him,—and, below

FIRST CAPTAIN.

The plains,  
The valleys, e'en the hills, are now submerged—  
All but these mountain regions !

ARBA.

And the city?

FIRST CAPTAIN.

Where late we sojourned? You know its site  
Commanding, by a river, deep and wide,  
Girdled.—That night, your messengers arrived,  
The river, which till then had sucked the floods  
Into its channel, sudden bursting, swept  
Half the broad city from its yielding banks.  
Our troops had cleared the gates.—But such a  
scene!

SECOND CAPTAIN.

Swarming rushed forth the population, wild  
To gain the distant mountains. Few achieved  
The daring effort. Childhood, feeble age,  
And female helplessness, the ground bestrewed,—  
Now the deeps cover all!

ARBA.

Is such the fate  
Of *all* earth's cities? Can this flood prevail,  
Or partial here?

SECOND CAPTAIN.

I had not thought before.—  
Incessant toil of body shuts out thought.—

ARBA.

Again, thrice welcome, though but for an hour!  
In vain we laboured to raise beacon fires,  
The hissing pines scarce smouldered. You may  
guess  
In this brief word, our depth of sufferance.  
Within the caves alone, a scanty flame  
Cheers us by turns.

FIRST CAPTAIN.

The king?

ARBA (*pointing to the cavern*).

He sleeps within.

This word recalls *your* need of welcome rest.  
Beneath yon arching rocks our comrades spread  
A frugal meal. (*To a soldier*),  
Attend these chiefs, and yield  
Those hospitable rites by sullen fate  
Permitted in this wilderness.

ARBA. ADMATHA.

ADMATHA.

Now, Arba,

How will the king these desperate tidings brook?

ARBA.

His moods alternate like the driving clouds—

Now raving for his armies, gloomy now,  
 Shunning, as hateful, e'en the faithful few  
 Who share his fate.—

ADMATHA.

But Zilia, ever nigh,  
 Will soothe him with her soft persuasive eyes  
 Searching for gentle looks in his.—(O blest,  
 Beyond the power of earthly sufferance,  
 To feel such heavenly soothings!) Her sweet  
     lips  
 Will press his hand, and, when in music ope  
 Those rosy portals, like the glowing east,  
 None issue thence, save angel messengers  
 On pity's errand bent.—

ARBA (*looking into the cavern and speaking  
     to a Soldier*).

He comes? Apprize

The captains!—

ARPHAXAD (*followed by ZILIA*).

—I slept.—What mockery doth the fiend of dreams  
 Waste on Arphaxad!—There was placed, a  
     throne—

And I, methought, sat on it.—

(*The CAPTAINS prostrate themselves.*)

## FIRST CAPTAIN.

Health to our lord, the king ! Upon his foes  
Fall these untold calamities, whilst he,  
Like the strong cedar on the mountain's brow,  
Spread forth his boughs, and fill the world with  
shade !

ARPHAXAD (*spurning them with his foot*).

Back, lying slaves !

Is this a time for flattery ? Look around !  
Where is my countless host, the embattled train,  
Which, like yon devastating elements,  
Swept o'er the earth ?—My royal palace, where ?  
(Dwelling for Gods !)—The city of my pride,  
Where tens of thousands revelled, like to kings,  
In structures gorgeous as the western clouds  
At golden sunset ? They have vanished, all—  
Melted like clouds in the great deep !—Myself,  
Crownless, and sceptreless, a blasted thing  
For the wild hurricane to rave at !—Curse——

## ARBA.

My royal master, pardon ! If I err,  
Accept my willing life !—Thy soldiers these,  
Have struggled through innumerable toils  
First to apprise their lord, the host is near !

ARPHAXAD.

Enough!—Let splendid robes reward them.—

*(He stamps.)*

Death!

Why mock me with the title of a king?  
 Bring forth the purple. Bring the gold, and gems,  
 Fit guerdons of the brave!—Ambassadors  
 Demand a princely welcome;—lo! *My* hall  
 Of state is yon dark cavern! These hoar pines  
 Its sombre curtains.—

*(Laughs convulsively.)*

Ha! Ha! Ha!—My brain

Is turning!—

*(He staggers back against a rock. They  
 gather around him.)*

ZILIA *(chafing his brow).*

Spare him to repentance yet!

In mercy, spare!

ARPHAXAD *(recovering).*

What murmurs my soft bride?

*(Turning to ARBA,)*

I think you named the troops?

FIRST CAPTAIN.

My lord, oh king!

They come, sore shattered. Of the numerous  
spoils,  
Reaped by thy valour, slender store remains.  
But faithful still, in fierce extremity,  
With care redoubled they conduct thy prize,  
The royal captive.—

ARPHAXAD.

Ha! I madden there!  
Shall the proud sovereign of the farthest east,  
Upon whose neck I placed my conquering foot,  
View me thus shorn of glory?—To the host!  
Fall on him, that he die!

ZILIA (*throwing herself at his feet*).

Oh, hear me, king!  
Recall the dreadful mandate! Said *he* not  
“Break off thy sins by mercy,—it may serve  
To lengthen thy tranquillity”?—

ARPHAXAD.

*Who said?*

Who dares arraign Arphaxad? Heard I right?  
Woman, thou ravest! Go!—Submission learn,  
Or *this* shall teach thee!

(*Lifting his faulchion.*—ARBA restrains

ADMATHA *from interposing.*)



ZILIA.

Arphaxad ! I must die, and death from thee  
Were sudden mercy.—From that awful arm  
Descends no second blow ;—but, for thy soul,  
Oh, add not crime to crime !—

(ADMATHA *struggles with* ARBA.)ARBA (*in a low voice*).

Insensate ! Hold !

As yet the king perceives not.—

ADMATHA.

Look ! Oh, look !

Those pleading hands ! Those humid eyes, up-  
raised !

Terror subdued—resigned, yet tremulous—  
Beautiful daring ! How her meekness braves  
The lightning of that blade !—Oh, joy with me !  
Behold the feather stem the hurricane !

ARBA.

The king is moved—he lifts her from the  
earth.—

ARPHAXAD (*with emotion*).

Not yet, not yet,  
Thou loveliest one, we part.—Possessing thee

Steals from despair a pang.—

*(Embraces ZILIA and places her by his side.)*

ARBA *(after a pause)*.

If sympathy

Can lessen human sufferance, king, believe

The world, deep groaning, suffers with its lord—

No voice of joy is heard.—

ZILIA.

Not so—not so—

There is one lonely bark, within whose breast

Sweet hymns perpetual rise, and social love

Confiding, slumbers on the rocking wave—

*That* refuge yet remains,—but not for us!—

FIRST CAPTAIN.

Pardon, most royal lady,—all who sought

Refuge in barks, by sudden whirlpool

Or mountain wave, were swallowed.—

ARPHAXAD.

Oh, the queen

Spake of the *Ark*, that lumbering progeny

Of mad intolerance! Its crazy host

Would fain have played the father to my bride,

And borne her off to sea! They gave her hopes,

Wondrous, no doubt,—but yet more wonderful

They did not quite succeed in tempting her  
To share its pleasures !

(ZILIA *hides her face, and weeps.*)

Ere the mounting flood  
Could lave its prow, the wretched inmates died.—

FIRST CAPTAIN.

May the king live for ever ! Dare I ask  
Died they by force, or by a natural end ?

ARPHAXAD.

Famine ! by my stern mandate !—

ZILIA.

O not so—

May Zilia speak, and live ? Believe, my lord,  
They *now* exist rejoicing.—All unharmed,  
Their vessel rides the tossing surge, preserved  
By power divine.—

ARPHAXAD.

She wanders ! Pretty one,  
I would not meddle with thy innocent dreams ;—  
Thou hast had woe enough.—

ZILIA.

I do not rave,

But speak the truth in soberness.—Forgive  
This bold assumption ! Meekly I would share

Knowledge abused, though learnt so long, and  
well!

But when all hope is past, all *earthly* hope,  
And caves, and forests shelter us no more,  
Then, be my darling wish fulfilled! May'st thou,  
(*embracing him,*)

My lord, and sovereign, at thy Zilia's side  
Lift up one prayer, *one* little prayer to Him,  
From whose Great Will, both we, and all the  
earth,  
So deeply have revolted!—That last cry  
For pardon, and acceptance, Be it heard!—

---

(*A still more elevated Mountain Region.*)

ZILIA (*reclining under the shelter of a rock*).

It is the lone, and solemn theatre—  
The last sad congregating of a world—  
Alas! say rather the exhausted few  
Who to this hour have agonized to save  
A forfeited existence! And *I* live,  
Doubly to drink the bitter cup in them,  
And in myself.—To watch the shoal and ebb  
Of human life, till the last shivered wreck

Be swept away !

God ! in Thine attributes  
Of terror, how sublime !—Above, around,  
Thunder the falling mountains ! At Thy frown  
Dissolving, from their yawning sides they pour  
Huge rivers.—From their shattered crests descend  
Masses of shapeless ruin.—Through the gloom,  
By Thy keen lightning searched, the blasted  
frame,

The breaking up of this most glorious world,  
Glares out, distinctly terrible !—Now seen,  
Now lost, in eddying darkness.—Every step  
Of the accursed territory lashed  
By thousand, thousand surges !—Say, my soul,  
Is this the realm for which we yielded up  
Life, and celestial hope ? Is yon dire gulph,  
Yon howling chaos, *sin's* tremendous meed ?  
And *he* mine idol ! whom I deified,  
And, in my wild, ambitious dreams, preferred  
Above the All-Ruling,—hath *his* love supplied  
A balm of healing power ? Ah, bitter lot !  
To be the helpless victim of a will,  
Absolute, uncontrolled, save by the goad  
Of its own fierce caprices !—Heaven *might* spare,—

But I have left Heaven's keeping,—flung myself  
 Into the blood-stained hands of——O my hopes!  
 Where have ye vanished? Wild, and tender  
                   hopes

Of Penitence, though late, acceptable—  
 Of mutual prayer—*Prayer*?—Ah, his blasphemies  
 Make my limbs shudder, and my blood run  
                   cold—

Where can I turn, where fly?—It must not be!  
 Desert my lord, my husband? Fatal tie,  
 Which binds me to destruction, binding, still,  
 E'en in despair's last struggle!—

                                  ——On they come,  
 The elements of judgment, terribly  
 Shaking the earth!—That crash! As on the ear  
 Its dying thunders sink, with horrid roar  
 New mountains shatter, and fresh throes convulse—

Palsied, with shock on shock, the spirit stunned  
 Seems to have lost the attribute of fear.—  
 —Sufferers alike with us, the savage beasts,  
 Driven from their lone recesses, draw around,  
 And with their tremulous yells invoke relief.—  
 None heed their presence—one tremendous doom  
 Involving all!—My lord!

ARPHAXAD (*descending from the rocks above*).

Zilia! We rest *alone*.—They are all gone—  
The gallant remnant.—

ZILIA.

All! Is Arba gone?  
The faithful sharer in thy dangers?—

ARPHAXAD.

Ay,—

His spirit sickened at protracted fate,  
Though loyalty still bound him to my side,  
With his brave band—I spake, and loosed their  
ties—  
“Be free, bold spirits!”

ZILIA.

Died they *all*?

ARPHAXAD.

They rushed,  
Like dauntless warriors, of one heart, one soul,  
Right onward to the brink, there, shouted thrice,  
And leaped the precipice!—

ZILIA.

Alas! Brave men!  
And yet I fear they died without a thought  
Of that more dread eternity which lay  
Beyond the earthly gulf!—

ARPHAXAD (*sternly*).

No folly, love!

Think you that idle visions could appal  
Daring, which ruin's most terrific form  
Impress'd not?—Souls they were, above all fear.—

ZILIA.

And who are they upon yon ledge beneath,  
Involved in sweeping foam?—

ARPHAXAD.

A coward few,  
Howling and stamping, of the giant race,  
Dastards, who shrink from death.—

(*Taking her in his arms.*)

Now, love, be still,  
Nor wring those milk-white hands—*we* die not  
*yet*—

Arphaxad still is king, while earth remain  
Enough to plant his foot.—He *chooses* life,  
While all around him perish.—Sighest thou  
O'er the unbent, the irreclaimable,  
The haughty spirit of thy mate? The mate  
Of thine own choice! Come, thou shalt have his  
care—

Care undivided.—Henceforth we must roam



In *blissful* solitude,—no witness left

Save one, expiring Nature!—

*(He sees ADMATHA approaching with  
faint steps.)*

Ha! What wretch?—

In evil hour thou comest.—

*(Leaving ZILIA, and advancing to meet him.)*

Admatha!

Forbear with curious step to follow us—

Be warned, the lion walks in lonely paths—

ADMATHA.

We are all equal in calamity.—

There is a star in this dark wilderness,

And I would die beneath its lovely light.—

*(Pointing to ZILIA.)*

ARPHAXAD.

Presumptuous! Meet thy wish.

*(Kills him.)*

—So, thou art gone—

This ravaged world is overpeopled still—

I loathe the eye which looks upon my fall.—

*(Observing that ZILIA has swooned,)*

Is it so? My lovely wreath of living flowers,

*(Taking her in his arms,)*

Pale on the churlish rock?—She must revive.—  
Now for the solitudes where human foot  
Shall follow us no more!—Yet, yet thou art mine.  
(*Bears her off.*)

---

(*The Summit of a Mountain. The waters have mightily prevailed upon the earth. ARPHAXAD, bearing ZILIA in his arms.*)

ZILIA.

Ah, whither strayest thou? What hope survives?  
Nay, lay me down to perish—my last breath  
Shall sigh, 'Forgive him, heaven!'

ARPHAXAD.

What, lay thee down? Can these strong sinews  
feel

Such fairy burthen? Zilia, wonderest thou  
At my untiring grasp? Love, thou art mine!  
All that is left to him, whom half the world  
Could not suffice.—So, this last step is gained—  
(*Looking around.*)

No hope.—All swallowed in the weltering main—  
But footing here remains, and with it, space  
To curse awhile.—

ZILIA.

By our lone walk,  
 Upon this world of wretchedness, together—  
 By all these heart-wrung tears of agony—  
 I do beseech thee to forbear! Submit  
 To the inevitable—

ARPHAXAD.

Zilia, for thee  
 I have endured—'Twere idle to recount  
 My toils and dangers.—How these sheltering arms  
 Have borne thee next my heart, reviving thee  
 With its best warmth.—How for thy sustenance  
 The panting deer hath fallen, and for thy couch  
 The bear and lion yielded up, in death,  
 Their shaggy spoils.—And what to gain? A  
     space,  
 A paltry space of life, in suffering!—  
 Here ends our term.—But, to *submit*? I scorn,  
 Bitterly scorn, the base suggestion!—

ZILIA.

Ah,  
 Doth scorn befit thee *now*? O pardon me!  
 Patience and penitence may yet avail—  
 We are in *His* hands, who——

ARPHAXAD.

In His? In *whose*? I feel thou art in *mine*—  
I, in mine own.—Lone, and bereft, I stand—  
Yet to His face defy the God, or fiend,  
Who, envying the glory of Arphaxad,  
Let loose this ruin.—

(*Grimly laughing,*)

Ha, ha, shrinkest thou?

ZILIA.

At blasphemies like these? Lost as I am,  
A recreant to the Lord, I dare to pray,  
To pray for thee, Arphaxad.—Oh, clench not  
Thy hands, and laugh so madly.—Why thus gaze  
Upon thy sword, and then at me?—Alas,  
Methinks I dread thy furious glances more  
Than the hot lightning.—Wilt thou——

ARPHAXAD.

Trembling one,  
Creep to my bosom.—Thou *must* die—and boots it  
By what, or whom? Say, shall Arphaxad wait  
Tamely the pleasure of the loitering waves,  
While *this* remains?

(*Raising his faulchion.*)

ZILIA.

Avert the deed, kind heaven!  
Spare this last, impious, rushing into blood!  
—O look, Arphaxad, look, it comes, the Ark!

ARPHAXAD.

By all the demons, 'tis a phantasy  
Sent by the king of hell to sear my brain—  
My crowning curse!—It cannot be—

ZILIA.

No curse,  
But a most heavenly messenger of grace,  
A token He can save. Perhaps even now—  
So be it, as my hope—the Lord approves  
The contrite, He can melt the stubborn heart.  
May He in mercy hear!

*(She prostrates herself.)*

ARPHAXAD *(spurning her)*.

Up, minion! Darest thou bend a slavish brow,  
That brow so lately honoured by the touch  
Of this world's proudest diadem?—Pray not—  
Or pray to *me*, that I may lengthen out  
Thy span a little while, to weep, and gaze  
Upon a refuge, inaccessible,

If that can pleasure thee !

ZILIA.

It floats away !

ARPHAXAD (*hurling a fragment of rock into the deep*).

Rocks shatter ! Floods engulph it !

ZILIA.

It hath passed !—

So like a dream my hopes.—O, holy seer,  
True prophet, had *thy* gentle voice prevailed,  
I might have now been——Fruitless retrospect !  
Fruitless repining !—Yes, this earthly frame,  
In which I sinned, *must* perish.—Be it so !  
Judge, merciful, yet just ! Upon my knees,  
I wait Thy righteous chastisement !

ARPHAXAD (*furiously*).

Not *his*,

But mine, receive ! What, rebel, to my face ?

(*Stabs her.*)

Keen sword,

Well hast thou done thy work.—And now remains,  
Thy last, and noblest triumph.—Rise, great deep !  
Roll on, ye mountain surges ! ye shall whelm

No living victim.—

*(With menacing gestures,)*

Enemy unseen !

I summon Thee to witness my last act

Of sovereignty !

*(He raises the sword to slay himself; in that  
instant a vast wave breaks and overwhelms  
him in the abyss of waters.)*

HYMN *(from the Ark).*

Lord of the boundless deep,

As our lonely course we keep,

Along the great abyss impelled, on giant surges  
rolling—

Safe in Thy grasp we lie,

Led through immensity—

Thy word, Thine arm omnipotent, the chaos wild  
controlling !—

Oh, solemn walk with God,

O'er depths before untrod ;

This howling waste, this solitude, sustained by  
Thee, we dare.—

This universal death—  
Nor voice, nor stir, nor breath—  
But wrath, exterminating wrath, stern flashing  
everywhere !

Yes, at thy feet reclined,  
Holist, a peace we find,  
A peace confiding, hallowed, deep, like childhood's  
happy slumber—  
Adoringly we prove  
Sovereign electing love—  
And mercies, which all human cares, and human  
joys outnumber !

Again, this buried earth  
Shall spring as at her birth—  
Again her mountain altars rise, their brows with  
verdure crowning—  
Again thy smile of light  
Shall kindle to delight,  
All lovely things which, blasted, lie beneath Thy  
righteous frowning.



And should this guilty world  
Once more to ruin hurled,  
Melt 'neath the red cherubic brand, whose fires  
o'er Eden streamed,  
Still in the Ark of Grace  
Thy saints shall find their place,  
Safe from the earth's great furnace drawn—Thy  
sealed, Thine own redeemed.

THE END.

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